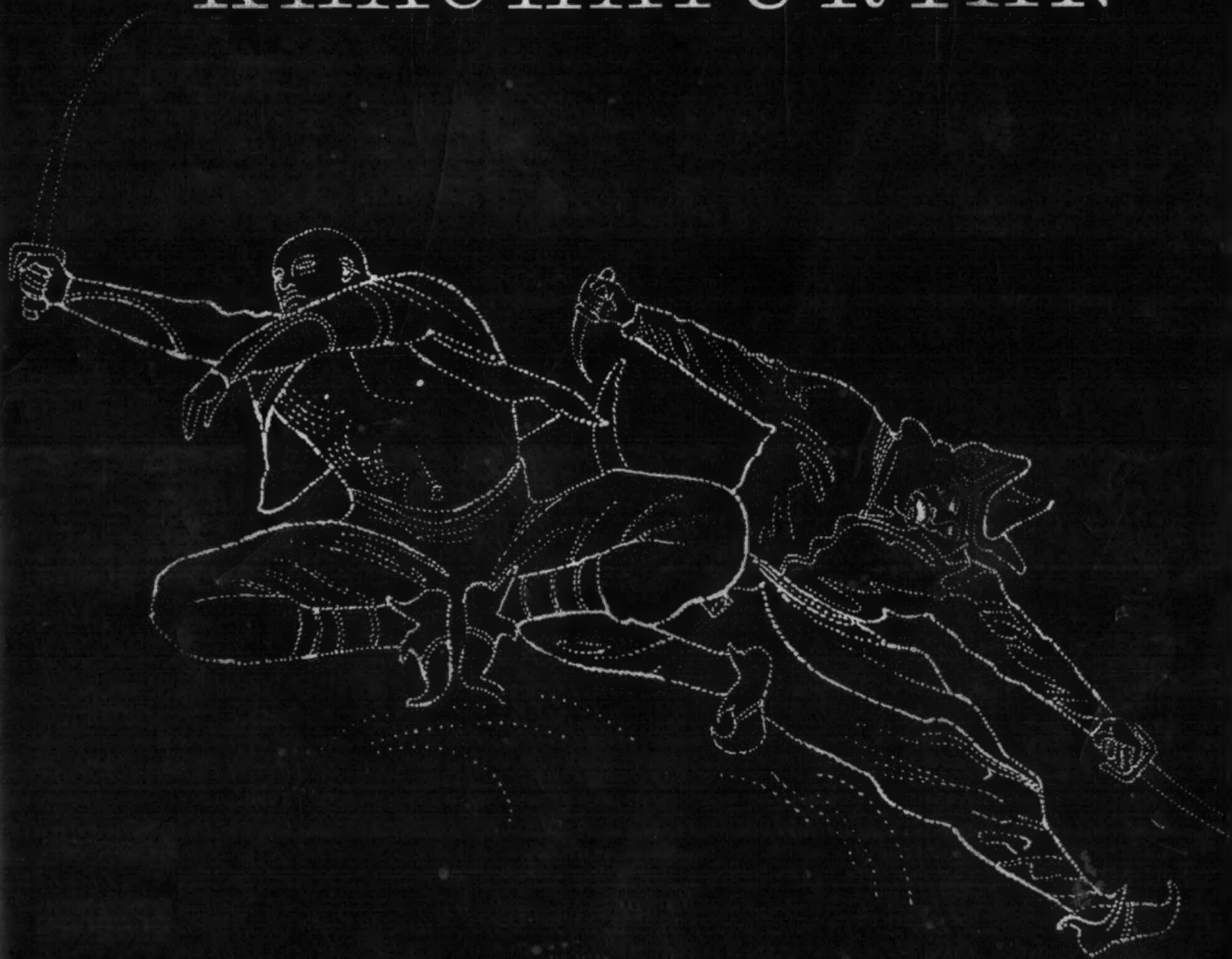


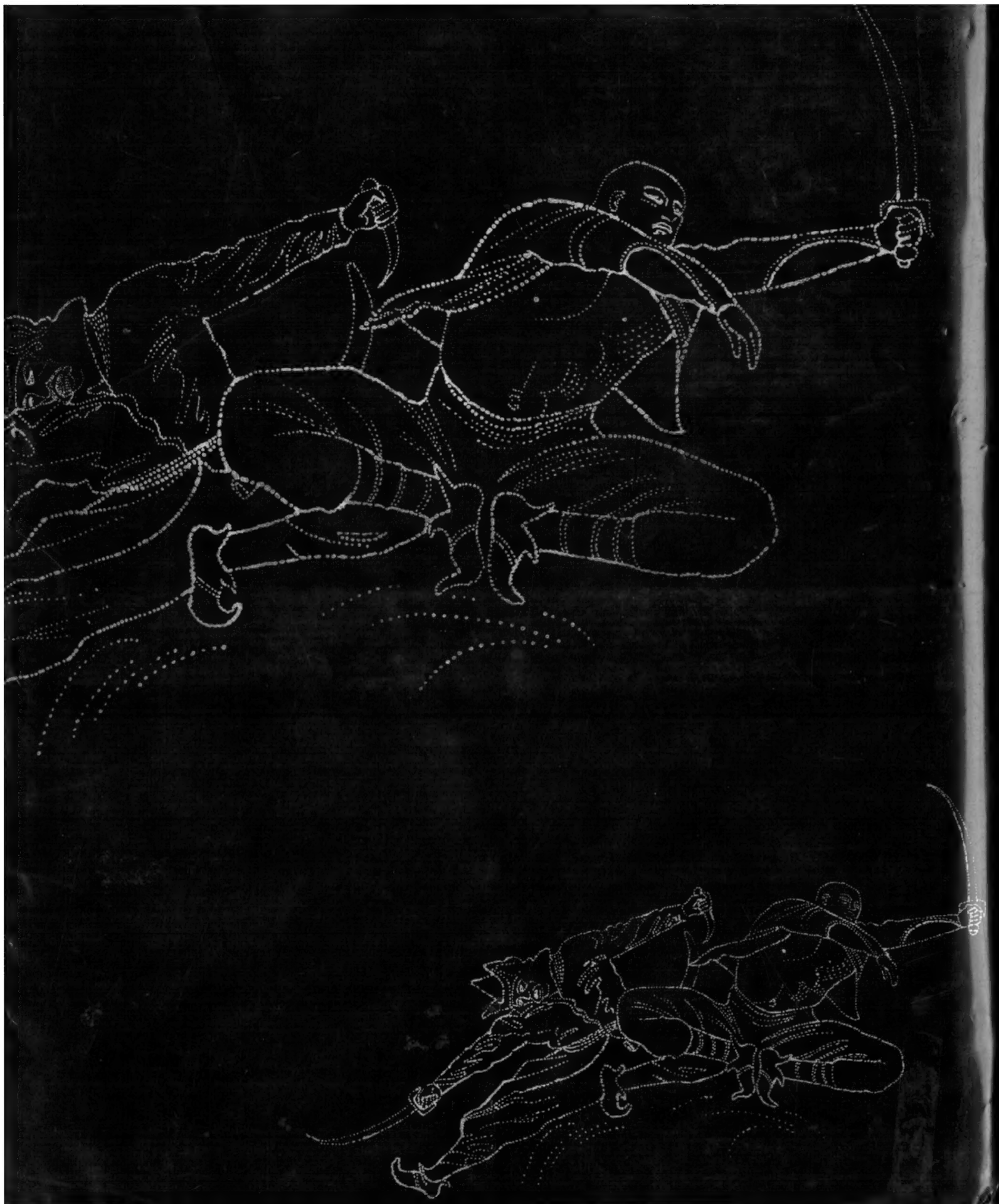
ARAM KHACHATURYAN



Grigory
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Aram Khachaturyan's music has been popular with British audiences for twenty years and is known and loved throughout the world. In this biography the author, well-known Soviet musicologist and editor of the journal **Soviet Music**, while giving an outline of Khachaturyan's life and development, devotes most of his attention to the music itself and to the particular contribution made to world music by the Armenian composer

Central

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GRIGORY SHNEERSON



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KHACHATURYAN



Printed in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

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Г. ШНЕЕРСОН

АРАМ ХАЧАТУРЯН

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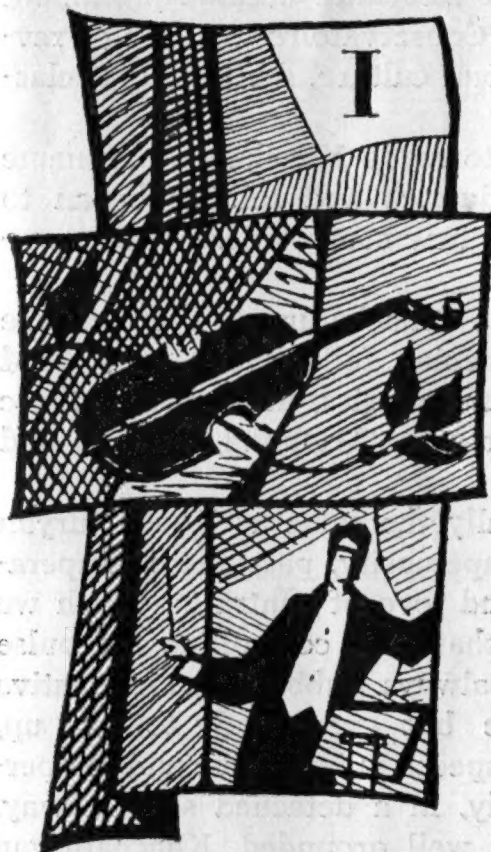
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C H A P T E R

IT WOULD be hard to name a piece of modern symphonic music that could vie in popularity with Aram Khachaturyan's *Sabre Dance*. Its vivid and fascinating melody, the compelling drive of its rhythm, the resplendent colours of its orchestration, never fail to arouse the enthusiasm of audiences whether in Moscow or Budapest, London or Buenos Aires, Tokyo or New York.

This orchestral miniature focuses some of the finest features of Khachaturyan's exuberant talent, deeply rooted in the rich folk art of the Soviet East.

Yet it would be wrong to judge Khachaturyan's versatile talent by these features alone. The significance of his work lies mainly in the truly novel contribution he has made to the symphonic music of our time. His strength is his ability to translate great events into music, to paint musical pictures animated with the ardour and sincerity of a big artist and humanist.

Khachaturyan's career has been a happy one. His earliest works, written when he was a student of the Moscow Conservatoire, already bear the unmistakable stamp of his individuality. The young composer attracted notice, first at the Conservatoire and later, after the appearance of his *Song-Poem* for violin and his Trio, among music-lovers in general. From the first Khachaturyan stood out as a most promising artist with an independent judgement and personality of his own.

The young musician's environment favoured the development of his artistic views. His instructors were Mikhail Gnesin and Nikolai Myaskovsky, composers who had received their training under the great masters of Russian music, N. Rimsky-Korsakov and A. Lyadov. His fel-

low-students, too, were gifted young men who later became prominent Soviet composers. The atmosphere at the Conservatoire was one of reverence for the traditions of national musical culture, for the great classical music of the past.

His First Symphony and Piano Concerto made Khachaturyan's name known abroad. Well-known foreign conductors and soloists began to perform his works. Audiences received his new compositions with growing enthusiasm.

In his search for novel musical media Khachaturyan drew on the wealth of melodies and rhythms of Armenian folk music; he studied assiduously the creative methods of musical classics, in particular those of the "creators of Russian music about the East"—Glinka, Borodin and Rimsky-Korsakov.

Khachaturyan the composer is essentially the same as Khachaturyan the man. The love of life, strong will, impetuosity, passionate temperament, impulsiveness, ebullient emotion and love of contrasts, which we find in his music, are traits of his own character, controlling the pulse of his life. He is buoyant, enthusiastic, always bubbling with creative ideas, easily excitable and even irascible but ever ready to own up, touchy and yet kind and benevolent. His speech is impulsive and temperamental. He cannot discuss music calmly, in a detached sort of way. All his ideas about art are original and well grounded. Khachaturyan may be said to carry within himself a "tuning-fork," unerringly true and fine, by which he determines his artistic likes and dislikes.

When in the heat of a musical discussion he finds himself at a loss for verbal arguments, he goes up to the piano and his fingers provide him with extremely eloquent and apt musical "arguments." If the melody he chances to pick out in proof of his view happens to catch his fancy, he warms to it, adds harmony, uses the loud pedal and presents his music in driving rhythms. When the flow of music becomes too much for the ten fingers to cope with, he adds his voice. Incidentally, with that husky "composer's" baritone of his he can create a very convincing musical image. At the same time he contrives to put in a word here and there, to provide fitting commentary to the musical discourse.

It is noteworthy that Khachaturyan remembers all his numerous compositions, both long and short. At a moment's notice he can play from memory any harmonic sequence or polyphonic progression from any of his works, including those he wrote as a student.

Khachaturyan usually composes at the piano but his orchestral works he notes down right in the score without resorting to piano score. He uses the piano as the source of inspiration—new musical ideas come to him as he plays. For him, the notions "inspiration" and "work" are inseparable, because the happiest finds, the fruits of "inspiration," can only take shape as a result of strenuous work which brings about the creative mood. He does not invent musical ideas, they come to him of themselves, rising from his quick emotions and the impulsive expression of his deep inner feeling.

The mood for creation usually comes to him late in the evening or at night. His days are taken up with a host of things unrelated to composition. Work at the Union of Soviet Composers (he was elected to the Secretariat at the Second Congress of the U.S.S.R. Union of Composers), teaching at the Conservatoire and at the Gnesin Musical Institute, sessions of different commissions and art councils, meetings with his colleagues, reporters and pupils—all this interferes with composing, but the social man in him would not live without it.

"I do not see how a modern composer could isolate himself from life, from social work," Khachaturyan often says. "The more impressions from contact with life, the more creative ideas, and the better their realization. Of particular importance to me are my tours of the country, my concert appearances, my meetings with the youth and front-rank workers. I look upon these meetings as a source of spiritual enrichment. True, you don't always find what you are looking for, and then you are sorry you've lost so much time. But then what a joy it is to meet an attentive and sensitive audience, not always well-versed in symphonic music perhaps, but appreciative of beauty and eager to comprehend art in full. I know of no better audience than the Soviet student youth."

Though a true townsman, Khachaturyan loves nature passionately and in winter he usually spends two or three days a week in his country-house near Moscow. Here he can work unmolested, or roam the forest, admiring the serene winter landscape. The forest and the sea are what he loves best in nature. In summer, when not on concert tour, Khachaturyan usually takes his wife and son to the Crimea. He turns to nature for relaxation from the hubbub of city life, as a tonic for his creative faculties.

Khachaturyan is a man of many and varied interests. He is a good judge of painting (his favourite modern artists being Martiros Saryan, Pyotr Konchalovsky, Diego Rivera and Pablo Picasso), he likes reading memoirs and is fond of the circus. But, apart from music, his greatest passion is the theatre. This devotion dates back to his youth and was further strengthened by close contacts with some outstanding actors during his first years in Moscow and by work with the companies of Moscow's leading theatres—Art, Maly, Vakhtangov and others—for which he wrote incidental music. To quote Khachaturyan: "I have such a passion for the theatre that if music had not captivated my whole being when it did I should probably have become an actor."

His love for the theatre, his fine sense of the stagecraft, of the actor's and director's art have doubtless influenced Khachaturyan's musical imagery which often is spectacular, highly expressive, and characterized by acute dramatic conflicts.

The theme of love of his country, of his people, is manifest in all of his work. His full-blooded and joyous music is imbued with the spirit of our days, of the novel features of socialist society.

In order to understand the origin of the art phenomenon known as "the music of Khachaturyan," one should evoke in one's mind the music that sounded in Tbilisi, the capital of sunny Georgia where Aram Khachaturyan was born and spent his childhood. Georgian, Armenian and Azerbaijan songs heard in the streets of the big southern city from morning to night were the early impressions deeply engraved on the memory of the gifted child. In mature years, after Khachaturyan had mastered the secrets of composition and experienced the influence of the Russian symphonic school, he, nevertheless, preserved intact those early impressions, as well as his love for the captivating music of the Eastern peoples.

This is what the composer himself says in his article "My Idea of the Folk Element in Music" published in the *Sovetskaya Muzyka* (Soviet Music) magazine, No. 5, 1952: "To try and answer the question what is my idea of the folk element in art I must turn to my own musical biography and recall the varied artistic impressions of my childhood and youth. I grew up in an atmosphere rich in folk music: popular festivities, rites, joyous and sad events in the life of the people always accompanied by music, the vivid tunes of Armenian, Azerbaijan and Georgian songs and dances performed by folk bards and musicians—such were the im-

pressions that became deeply engraved on my memory, that determined my musical thinking. They shaped my musical consciousness and lay at the foundation of my artistic personality which developed later, during the years of study and subsequent creative work. Whatever changes and improvements took place in my musical tastes in later years, their original substance, formed in early childhood in close communion with the people, has always remained the natural soil nourishing all my work."

Khachaturyan's musical idiom has its roots deep in folk music; most of his compositions, large and small, are imbued with the spirit of national art. And yet he seldom, if ever, quotes folk melodies, and never resorts to stylization. He further says in that article:

"It would be wrong to denounce the method of quoting genuine folk melodies for achieving definite artistic aims. We know too well that the Russian classics made extensive use of this method. Indeed careful preservation of a folk melody, leaving it intact while enriching it with harmony and polyphony, enhancing its expressiveness through the colourist media of the orchestra, chorus, etc., can yield very good results.... I for my part prefer another approach to the folk melody, the one when the composer, in pursuance of his ideas and guided by his artistic sense, utilizes it as a seed, as the initial melodic motif to be freely developed, transformed, and musically enriched.... But in order not to violate the nature of folk melodies, the composer must have a keen understanding of the national style, he must feel the essence of folk music with all his heart and soul."

Elements of national form are not the only criterion of folk art. National form may be utilized as a vehicle for different ideological contents. The strength of Khachaturyan's art lies in its closeness to the progressive aspirations of his people, in the truthful depiction of the vital problems and phenomena of reality.

His compositions are optimistic, permeated with sunshine and *joie de vivre*. A consistent advocate of realist art with a definite ideological content growing out of the infinitely varied forms of national art, Khachaturyan hates all kind of hackneyed ready-made precepts. He is a true innovator in art and firmly believes that every new artistic task entails search for a new form. His musical idiom, captivating in its freshness and original national colour, satisfies the demands of progressive modern art.

Khachaturyan may in all justice be considered the founder of a new symphonic school based on the inexhaustible wealth of Transcaucasian folk song. He is the first Armenian composer to create large-scale lyric-epic symphonic works addressed to his contemporaries. For all their originality and structural complexity, his symphonies, as well as his concertos and symphonic poems, are comprehensible to millions of listeners.

In Khachaturyan's opinion, innovation should be the aspiration of any serious composer whose aim it is to reflect life's phenomena in full, but it should never be cultivated for itself. Always alive to technical mastery and perfection in musical works, Khachaturyan denounces any technical tricks if they do not convey to the listener the composer's idea.

"You mustn't divorce technique from live music which is meant to touch the listener's heart strings," the composer says. "Technique is all very well when the artist has something to say, to communicate to his audience, when he is a bard of his people, of his time, of which he can present a true and convincing picture."

These ideas are borne out by Khachaturyan's own work; he never tires of looking for new ways in art and never abandons the position of realist art serving lofty ideas and aspirations.

The imagery of his symphonic works is varied and many-sided. Beauty and light, the spirit of our time, love of mankind and nature, joy of life and the rapture of creation—these and other themes find reflection in his music which is in close affinity with democratic culture.

Joy and happiness, however, are attained as a result of struggle, of acute conflicts. Hence the impetuosity and dramatic tenseness of many of the passages in the Second Symphony reflecting the experiences of the Soviet people during the trying war years. Hence the exalted pathos of struggle in the mass episodes of the ballet *Spartacus*. Hence the atmosphere of tragic doom hanging over Nina Arbenina in the Waltz from the incidental music for Lermontov's *Masquerade*.

Khachaturyan possesses a rare gift of melody. His ideas find their realization primarily in expressive melodies, in catchy song and dance tunes. His unbridled creative imagination and sense of rhythm enable Khachaturyan to develop his melodic finds freely, enriching them with ever new features.

His harmonic thinking, rooted in Oriental folk music, is highly original. Many of the peculiarities of Khachaturyan's harmony stem from

the modes and tuning of Caucasian folk instruments, such as *tar*, *kemancha*, and *saz*. The early musical impressions buried deep in his subconsciousness developed naturally in the process of his study of the foundations of classical harmony as practised in Russian and West-European music.

Khachaturyan's orchestral palette is extremely rich and impressive. He appreciates and knows how to utilize the beauty of the different timbres, the versatility and expressiveness of tonal colours. With what would seem to be simple means he achieves a magical effect with the orchestra, always pliable, supple and sparkling with life.

In the words of Boris Asafyev, the well-known Soviet music scholar, "Khachaturyan's music says: 'Let there be light and joy!'"



C H A P T E R

TBILISI, the capital of Georgia, is one of the oldest cities in the world. It lies picturesquely in the fertile valley of the Kura, in Central Caucasus. The famous Metekh Castle, a monument of thirteenth-century architecture, crowns the steep high bank of the swift-flowing river, a salient feature in the skyline of the old part of the city. Some distance away is the majestic Zion Temple whose construction was begun as early as the seventh century. A beautiful panorama of Tbilisi opens to view from David's Mountain, called *Mtatsminda* in Georgian.

Tbilisi strangely combines the features of an old Oriental town and those of a large European centre. At the beginning of this century the contrast was particularly striking: at the foot of the ruins of an old fortress crowning a bare rock, sprawled the old town with its narrow tortuous streets and by-ways, huddling houses and petty shops selling all and every kind of merchandise; but a few minutes' walk took you into the broad Golovinsky (now Rust'haveli) Prospekt lined with magnificent palaces, luxurious shops and theatres, in no way differing from those of any European city. The Armenian Bazaar noisy with a picturesque Oriental crowd, with the artisans working right in the open among the general bustle and hubbub, and side by side with it—the well-ordered life of the central streets with beautiful turn-outs of the local magnates and big tsarist officials. It was in a patriarchal Armenian family living in a side-street of the southern city that the future composer spent his childhood years.

Aram Khachaturyan was born June 6, 1903. His father, Yegiya (Ilya) Khachaturyan, a book-binder, came of a peasant family from Aza, a vil-

lage in former Nakhichevan Gubernia (today Nakhichevan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, part of Azerbaijan S.S.R.).

This is what the composer told us of his early years:

"We lived in a plain two-storey house in Kirpichny Lane off Olginskaya Street. That was a district typical of old Tiflis, cramped with houses clambering up the mountain-side. They all had flat roofs, narrow galleries running the entire length of the first and second floors and tiny courtyards wedged in between the buildings. The people lived virtually in the streets; the doors were never locked and the comings and goings of friends and relatives, weddings, family joys and sorrows took place in full view of all the neighbours.

"I recall Tbilisi as a town of songs. Everybody sang: the artisan as he worked in his little yard or in the street in front of his house, the street vendors selling Georgian sour milk, fruit and fish. Each vendor had an individual melody of his own, an expressive motif that I shall never forget. As evening fell, the courtyards were filled with songs and dance melodies, now gay and carefree, now tender and languid. And what a world of musical impressions assailed one at the market-place! And the festivals! There was the scorching sun, a playful breeze carrying strains of music from every corner, and we boys playing warriors or running for a bathe to the Kura...."

As a boy Khachaturyan was fond of watching the graceful and impetuous folk dances performed on holidays wherever there was room in the streets.

The Caucasian lezghinka has many different variants but all of them are danced in colourful national costume emphasizing the slim waists and lithe movements of men and women. The woman moves in a circle lightly, like a floating bird, her demure and teasing gestures challenging her partner. In his impetuous movements the man demonstrates his strength, daring, passion and dexterity.

The compelling and fast rhythm of the music played by a small group of folk musicians hypnotizes both the dancers and the spectators. The guttural cries and handclaps of the crowd spur on the dancers. With each successive round the tempo accelerates. The man circles round his partner with consummate confidence and undescribable grace. Catching hold of the ends of his long flying sleeves he throws his arms open, eager to embrace the beautiful maiden it seems. Scarcely touching the ground with the toes of his soft boots he performs a complex rhythmic pattern

with his feet. In full flight, he drops on his knees and the next moment he rebounds into the air like a rubber ball. And the woman, glowing with suppressed excitement, now comes dancing closer to him, and now moves away again.

How all-powerful and elemental is the force of the dance! How deep was the impression it made on the consciousness of the future composer! And how vividly and originally has he conveyed the spirit of the folk dance in his ballets, symphonies and concertos!

The gift for music usually manifests itself at an earlier age than any other. We know from history the names of many great musicians who started their professional careers at an extremely tender age. Khachaturyan, however, was late in becoming a musician. His unshakable decision to devote himself to music only came to him at the age of nineteen when he entered the Gnesin Music School in Moscow.

Until then the robust black-eyed boy was no different from his playfellows, and his dearest pastime was climbing trees and playing football in the street. He would spend his days and evenings out of doors and if he stayed out too late he came home by way of the fence and gallery.

So far his talent asserted itself in his keen attention to the music around him and inventing the most varied rhythms which he beat on an old copper basin he found in the attic.

When Aram was eight his family moved to Velikoknyazheskaya Street, closer to the centre. And here an important event happened in the boy's life: an old decrepit piano with half of its keys missing was bought for next to nothing from the former tenants. This old piano became a means of self-education for the future composer, helping him to find out for himself the correlation of musical tones.

"As I remember it now," Khachaturyan told us, "at first it was a hit-or-miss search for keys that would produce a familiar tune. Then there were clumsy attempts at finding chords in the left hand to go with the melody in the right, what you might call first essays at composition. Not satisfied with playing the melodies of folk songs and of popular dances, I tried to vary, to alter them, to think up a continuation for some of them. . . ."

Another important event in young Khachaturyan's life was becoming a pupil of Princess Argutinskaya-Dolgorukaya's boarding-school. His father bound books for the Princess who was a prominent educator in Tbilisi, and she accepted his son as a day pupil of her boarding-school.



The Khachaturyan family, Tiflis, 1914 (sitting, left to right: brother Suren, the mother, Kumash Sergeyevna, Aram, the father, Egia (Ilya) Voskanovich, brother Levon; standing: Suren's wife Sarra, brother Vaginak and his wife Arus)



Aram Khachaturyan in 1922, the year when he began his studies at the Gnesin Music School in Moscow

Going to a school where the pupils were mostly the children of well-to-do people, merchants and officials, changed Aram's life and habits considerably. He had to leave the gay and reckless life of a street urchin, he could no longer participate in the boisterous pranks of his former play-fellows, because the discipline at the boarding-school was strict and the pupils were expected to be obedient and well-behaved. It would have been hard for the naturally mischievous lad to adapt himself to the strict demands of school discipline but for his love for the singing lessons. The school's principal attached no small importance to singing and had engaged the services of Musheg Agayan, a musician of repute, the son of the famous Armenian writer, Gazaros Agayan. Soon little Aram's keen ear for music, a wonderful musical memory and a sense of harmony became apparent.

But then he had always been very fond of singing and used to it at home. His father and elder brothers sang in their spare time and at work in the book-binding shop adjoining the house. His mother knew many beautiful Armenian songs, and these melodies were deeply engraved on Aram's memory.

"My father and mother handed down to me their love for folk music. From my mother I learned many an Armenian and Azerbaijan song; I'll never forget the sad Armenian Hunter's Song she used to sing. Many years later I based the slow movement of my Second Symphony on that song. My father, too, knew quite a lot of Armenian songs and he was the one to lead choral singing at all our family festivities. He especially liked singing to the accompaniment of the *tar*."

This is what Valery Bryusov, an outstanding Russian poet and excellent translator of Armenian poetry into Russian, says about the Armenian folk song:

"For all its passion, the Armenian song is chaste; for all its ardour, it is restrained in expression. This is poetry both Oriental in extravagance and Occidental in wisdom; it knows sorrow without despair, passion without excess, ecstasy alien to unrestraint....

"Its peculiar elegance of form and its fresh approach to every artistic task make it possible to consider Armenian folk poetry the songs of an artistic people."*

The emotional content, melodies and rhythms of the Armenian song

* "Introductory Remarks" to the *Collection of Armenian Poetry*, 1916.

are extremely varied. It is the essence of the people's artistic aspirations, a mirror of history, of the people's life itself.

The Armenian songs Khachaturyan heard as a boy revealed to him the national spirit, life, and culture of his people.

He first learned to read music at the boarding-school, and when, later, he entered the Commercial School, he became a member of the student brass band, playing third, then second and, finally, first tenorhorn. The boy's love of music took different forms, expressing itself in his devotion to the singing lessons, his interest in the band activities and his desire to capture the essence of rhythm.

"My obsession with music," the composer said in later years, "would often interfere with my studies. Instead of doing my homework I would spend hour upon hour singing my favourite folk songs, improvising songs of my own or beating rhythms, trying to find new and unusual rhythmic patterns."

Another rich source of musical impressions were the songs of itinerant folk bards, *ashugs* and *gusans*. The impressionable boy was captivated by the bards' inspired and deeply significant art, with its true folk spirit, built up through the people's historical experience and popular tradition. These early impressions found reflection in Khachaturyan's later work. The folk singers' art of improvisation, the characteristic timbres of the instruments accompanying their singing, the rich and varied range of emotions in their inspired rhapsodies, all this enriched Khachaturyan's musical thinking and influenced the development of his original and markedly national idiom.

The only visit to the Tbilisi opera house (the Khachaturyans could not afford attending opera and concert performances often) was young Aram's most vivid musical experience. The opera was *Abesalom and Eteri* by the classic of Georgian music, Zakhary Paliashvili. What struck him most, was the orchestra, the variety of instrumental timbres and the beauty of harmony.

"All next day I went about in a daze," Khachaturyan recalls. "I re-lived the touching story of the love of Abesalom and Eteri and their musical characterization."

Khachaturyan was very keen on playing in the band. It was a tradition in Tbilisi for all secondary schools to have their own bands vying with one another in the performance of marches and dances at school festivities and balls. The band of the Commercial School where Aram was

a pupil was conducted by a certain Gonsiorski, a musician of Polish origin, an experienced band leader and strict instructor. He took great pains with every piece studied, and his band's playing was well-balanced and harmonious. In playing his instrument (chiefly by the ear) young Khachaturyan would make "pretty tunes" by inventing his own voice-leading. Sometimes his experiments were successful but now and again he would stray and get stuck, which, of course, aroused the ire of Gonsiorski who loved "good order" above all other things.

There was among them a certain Yarov, a senior pupil who played the cornet. This young man once astonished everybody by composing a waltz. Strictly speaking, he composed only the melody, the harmony and orchestration being the work of Gonsiorski; nevertheless Khachaturyan saw in him a man who could write music—a composer—to whom was revealed some covered secret hidden from the uninitiated.

In Khachaturyan's own words, "Since then I became a prey to a vague longing which gradually became more and more definite—in my dreams I saw the day when I, too, would compose a waltz of my own, when I would invent my own melody which had never existed before."

In spite of the modest resources of a school band, playing in it was very good for Khachaturyan: he acquired a practical knowledge of many wind instruments, learned to know their timbres, to hear the harmony resulting from the blending of the different instruments. His piano continued to assist in Aram's musical development. He had not been taught to play the piano and had but an elementary knowledge of the musical notation, yet he managed to play by the ear the melodies of popular songs and dances, and even excerpts from operas. His inborn sense of harmony enabled him to provide the accompaniment, and even find colourful chords often spiced with acute dissonances which, however, never struck him as "false notes." By the age of fifteen Aram gained the reputation of a good pianist among his relatives and acquaintances. He was often made to play dances and accompany singers at family gatherings. His passion for music notwithstanding, he was far from the thought of becoming a professional musician. When the conversation at dinner touched upon the boys' future, his father often said he wanted to see Aram a doctor or an engineer.

Aram's was a close-knit family; his elder brothers Suren and Vaginak helped their father in the book-binding business. The former, who later became well known in the theatrical world, played the mandolin rather

well and sang at amateur concerts. Vaginak, too, was an amateur actor. The youngest brother, Levon, sang well even as a little boy and later became a professional singer.

In 1910 Suren who had always dreamed of the stage, left Tbilisi for Moscow where he made friends with the actors of the Art Theatre and the First Studio, its outgrowth.

The Moscow Art Theatre's First Studio was founded by Stanislavsky in 1912 for training talented youth; the young actors (including such men as Yevgeny Vakhtangov, Mikhail Chekhov, Nikolai Batalov, subsequently famous actors and directors) were brought up in the spirit of Stanislavsky's teaching; the Studio's performances soon enlisted the sympathies of Moscow's theatre-goers.

On the initiative of Suren Khachaturov (he used this variation of the family name) an Armenian Drama Studio was founded in Moscow, another adherent to Stanislavsky's system.

At the time of the October Revolution Aram Khachaturyan was fourteen years old. A few years after the establishment of Soviet rule in Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, national economy, culture and public life entered upon a period of all-round development. The achievements of the Revolution turned a new page in the life of the Transcaucasian peoples and served as a powerful stimulus to their culture and art. The new conditions gave a new turn to Aram Khachaturyan's life.

He came into contact with new life first as a member of a group of cultural workers who travelled by the so-called "Propaganda Train" sent from Tbilisi to Yerevan to popularize the ideas of Soviet power. At the open doors of a goods waggon a piano was placed and when the train pulled in at a station Khachaturyan sat down and played, attracting the crowds on the platform to the waggon. The other members of the group in the meantime distributed leaflets and popular books, and made speeches calling upon all present to stand for the Revolution.

In the autumn of 1921 Suren Khachaturov came to the Caucasus to recruit fresh talent for the Armenian Studio; he picked out some talented young actors and actresses in Tbilisi and Yerevan.

The family council decided to send young Aram to Moscow under the protection of his elder brother. Suren readily assented, because he saw clearly that Moscow was the best place for the development of Aram's talent.

"We travelled to Moscow in two goods waggons," Khachaturyan recalls. "We were a merry crowd. The journey from Tbilisi to Moscow took us 24 days; we were held up at some of major stations for two or even three days. We had no money and food was scarce. But the leaders of our group found a way out: they contacted managers of railway clubs and we gave concerts in their premises. At one such concert at Prokhladnaya, we sang, danced and recited. I was the accompanist and had to provide accompaniment and make up the music for singing and dancing. One of the studio actresses was A. Mamikonyan, a teacher of eurhythmics. She listened attentively to my playing and urgently advised me to make music an object of serious study."



C H A P T E R

TIMES WERE hard when Aram Khachaturyan came to Moscow. The city, as well as the entire country, was suffering acutely from the consequences of war: people went hungry most of the time, the houses were unheated, audiences in theatres and concert halls had to keep their overcoats on, city transport was inadequate. Nevertheless, all Moscow theatres were bubbling with life, crowds of young people flocked to the disputes on poetry held in the Large Auditorium of the Polytechnical Museum where they drank in the revolutionary poems of Mayakovsky. Concert halls, too, were full.

This period in the history of the young Soviet Republic, when age-old prejudices came tumbling down and new ideas on the aims of progressive art were in the making, was one of acute struggle between different trends in art. Moscow was alive with all kinds of conflicting theatrical and literary groups and each new production of the theatres headed by K. Stanislavsky, V. Nemirovich-Danchenko, V. Meyerhold and A. Tairov provoked endless arguments among the youth.

Aram took up his quarters in the home of his elder brother and at once found himself in an atmosphere of heated artistic discussions. He made friends with the actors of the Art Theatre's First Studio, attended performances and rehearsals of Moscow theatres and met many eminent actors and directors.

An unforgettable experience was the recital of pianist Nikolai Orlov at the Institute of Rhythm with the programme of Chopin, Liszt and Scriabin. As he listened to the music, new and undreamt-of worlds opened up before the future composer. He was carried away by the pro-

found emotionality, astounding virtuosity and variety of colour in the playing of that outstanding artist.

A symphony concert at the Large Hall of the Moscow Conservatoire, too, produced a lasting impression on Khachaturyan. He heard Beethoven's Choral Symphony and Rachmaninov's Second Concerto with Professor Konstantin Igumnov, one of the most prominent of Russian pianists, as soloist.

"The lightning-like revelation of that concert," says Khachaturyan, "will never be erased from my memory. It was one of the most vivid artistic experiences in my life. To say nothing of the music itself and the sound of a symphony orchestra I was hearing for the first time in my life, I was struck by the surroundings, the atmosphere of excitement and expectation reigning in the vast hall, the rapt faces of the listeners. . . . I felt like a trespasser."

The prominent artists Khachaturyan met during his first years in Moscow were Vasily Kachalov, Ivan Moskvina, Mikhail Chekhov, Antonina Nezhdanova, Leonid Sobinov, Yevgeny Vakhtangov, Vsevolod Meyerhold and Alexander Tairov; it was his good fortune to be present at the talks Konstantin Stanislavsky and Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko gave to the actors and to see the painter Pyotr Konchalovsky at work in his studio. With all his youthful ardour he rushed into discussions of new theatre productions, was often seen at the disputes on poetry held in the Polytechnical Museum where he heard Vladimir Mayakovsky recite his poems. All this forcibly impressed the young man, yearning for knowledge and for great art.

His going to Moscow prevented Aram from finishing the eighth and last class of the Commercial School in Tbilisi. The problem now was to complete secondary education and to choose his road in life. He joined the preparatory courses of the Moscow University, finished them in the spring of 1922 and in that same year was accepted to the Biology Department of the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics.

Khachaturyan did a lot of reading in those years. His whole being responded ardently to the poetry of Mayakovsky, Blok, Bryusov, Isaakyan; and yet music remained his greatest passion. He was constantly to be seen at concerts in the Large and Small halls of the Conservatoire and at the Bolshoi Theatre performances. Whenever he had the least opportunity he would improvise on the piano, play tunes he had heard and compose his own. But he did not know how to put his musical ideas on

paper. His friends had long been urging Khachaturyan to take up music seriously, and in 1922, at the age of nineteen, he decided to go to the Gnesin Music School. With trepidation he crossed the threshold of that school famed for its excellent teaching staff and high standard of instruction.

He was auditioned by Yevgenia Fabianovna Gnesina, a discerning teacher who had heard about the talented but not conventionally schooled youth. She listened attentively to his playing which was far removed from academic standards technically but revealed young Aram's unmistakable musicality. The future composer's knowledge of music was clearly short of the requirements presented to those who wanted to enter the school, but his examiner sensed his talent at once and proposed that he should take up the study of the cello. This might have been dictated not so much by the natural aptitude Khachaturyan had shown as by Y. Gnesina's desire to recruit students to the recently-opened class of the violoncello.

After Yelena Fabianovna Gnesina, the school's principal, had been consulted, Khachaturyan was accepted to the cello class. His first teacher was S. Bychkov and later A. Borysyak, an experienced pedagogue under whose guidance Khachaturyan made rapid progress in cello playing.

A few years after his enrolment Khachaturyan appeared in the school's public concerts, playing solo and in ensembles. The concerts usually took place in the Small Hall of the Conservatoire, but on one occasion he had the good fortune to play in the Large Hall.

Speaking of Aram Khachaturyan in his first years at the Gnesin School, Mikhail Gnesin called him a "rough diamond." This comparison was fairly accurate, because the future composer's original talent and elemental temperament were in a dormant state, and the solicitous guiding hand of an experienced teacher was required to call them to life.

"After no more than two years of study," Mikhail Gnesin recalled, "Khachaturyan played a rather difficult piece of mine (*The Song of a Knight-Errant*) at a pupils' concert. It was well done, with a good understanding. He also made big strides in playing the piano. But his desire outran his abilities, and although he played readily enough, his fingering was simply fantastic."

M. Gnesin closely observed Khachaturyan's progress in harmony in his own class. Himself a composer of no small consequence, graduate of the St. Petersburg Conservatoire, Gnesin allowed his pupils free scope

for revealing their creative personalities. No need to say that Khachaturyan availed himself of this lack of restraint and often indulged in harmonic licence.

When a composition class was opened at the Gnesin School in 1925, Khachaturyan entered it on the advice of M. Gnesin. Here the young musician could wholly devote himself to his long-cherished passion for composition. He applied himself to it heart and soul, and soon gave up the study of cello altogether.

In Gnesin's class Khachaturyan studied classical music, the works of Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, Liszt, Glinka, Chaikovsky, Borodin, Mussorgsky, Balakirev and Rimsky-Korsakov.

He composed a number of instrumental pieces in which the distinctive features of his style—facile development of musical ideas following the live folk tradition, free, almost improvisatory, manner of presentation, penchant for striking colours and pungent rhythms—could already be discerned.

Naturally, these works were not entirely free from shortcomings as regards form and idiom: the young composer was not always successful in giving a convincing and highly artistic expression to the ideas and images seething in his mind. And yet even these early compositions contain pages captivating in their forceful originality, emotional impact and innate poetry. They have stood the test of time and some of them, though the work of a student, have remained repertoire fixtures to this day without losing a particle of their freshness. Such, for instance, are the *Dance* for violin and piano (1926), *Poem* for piano (1927), *Song-Poem* for violin and piano (1929); when they appeared they attracted the attention not only of Khachaturyan's teachers and fellow-students, but of concert artists as well; within a year they were published and performed on the concert stage.

These pieces astonish by the ease and confidence with which the budding composer solved extremely difficult problems of structure and harmony. True, an attentive ear will easily detect Ravel's influences in the *Dance*, but nevertheless even the earliest of Khachaturyan's compositions bear the unmistakable stamp of his personality, such as is familiar today to music-lovers all over the world.

Khachaturyan profited greatly by the lessons of M. Gnesin, a discriminating musician and tactful guide of young talent. He recalls the following episode:

"Mikhail Fabianovich used to offer us themes for variations. Once he gave us the theme of Grieg's *Solveig's Song*. All my fellow-pupils were careful to preserve the characteristic features of Grieg's style in their variations while I built two of my variations—*Intermezzo* and *Dance* on definitely Oriental rhythms. On listening to my variations Gnesin said: 'Whoever the rest of the class may imitate, Khachaturyan always imitates himself.'"

And these words, said jokingly by the experienced musician, are not far from the truth: one of the decisive features of Khachaturyan's personality is his original approach to the solution of artistic tasks posed by life itself. Even as a tyro, not in full command of the technique of composition, he wanted to be true to his own self, to compose in accordance with his inner urge, with the promptings of the live music of the people.

In Gnesin's class he applied himself closely to the study of polyphony. He wrote numerous exercises in strict counterpoint, composed fugues, but the hard and fast rules cramped his creative initiative and he himself admits that the seven fugues he wrote as a student of the Gnesin School were scholastic and uninteresting.

There was a family in Moscow with whom Khachaturyan struck a warm friendship and in whose house he was always made welcome—that of Yelena Beckman-Shcherbina, a Professor of the Moscow Conservatoire, an outstanding pianist and sensitive interpreter of the works of Scriabin, Debussy and Ravel. There he met many talented musicians who attended her home recitals, and this also served to develop his musical tastes.

There is no denying that the work of Debussy and Ravel attracted young Khachaturyan and influenced his style. What struck him in the music of these masters—particularly in Ravel's—was vivid harmonies and the novelty of melodies and rhythms, often stemming from folk-song sources. But while admiring Ravel's music Khachaturyan was never tempted to imitate this great master. Ravel and Debussy appealed to him with their original and piquant rhythms and the colourful quality of their music, and love of colour was fostered in Khachaturyan by the very essence of Oriental music.

At the end of the nineteen-twenties the struggle between realism and modernism in Soviet music became particularly acute. The composers in Moscow and Leningrad divided into a great variety of trends, quite a few young and talented musicians falling a prey to the temptations of

formalism, chasing after novelty for novelty's sake, and devoting their attention to the search for some new, unheard-of expressive media. With his flair for all that is new, Khachaturyan did not escape these influences and some of his early works show his interest in purely superficial originality of form. The composer, however, regards these works as mere experiments and thinks they helped him to develop a critical attitude towards his own work.

Mikhail Gnesin was wide awake to the dangers of the modernist trend and guided his pupils along the road of great humanitarian art. He brought them up in the spirit of patriotism, he wanted them to serve national art, to continue the tradition of Russian classical music. The study of symphonic and operatic scores by Glinka, Borodin, Rimsky-Korsakov and Mussorgsky—the great masters whose music is a true expression of the spiritual world and character of the people—did much to shape Khachaturyan's artistic thinking. He delighted in Borodin's *Polovtsian Dances* and the operas of Glinka and Rimsky-Korsakov. They provided answers to many of his questions and pointed to him the way of combining harmoniously the music of East and West.

The young man's inquiring mind benefited greatly by his association with prominent men in Russian culture and art. And yet while avidly drinking in the new impressions of Moscow artistic life, Khachaturyan never lost touch with the art of his native Armenia. He was active in the House of Armenian Culture in Moscow, the rallying centre of Armenian artists and talented student youth. It was there that he met Alexander Spendiarov, a pupil of Rimsky-Korsakov, the acknowledged dean of Armenian music. The venerable composer showed great interest in the progress of his young colleague. He appreciated Khachaturyan's talent and helped him in having some of his works published.

In the House of Armenian Culture Khachaturyan heard Shara Talyan, an outstanding Armenian singer, Armenian *ashugs*—folk bards—and the music of Komitas, an Armenian classic. Sometimes he appeared on the concert stage of the House playing his own compositions.

Even before his graduation from the Gnesin Music School Khachaturyan had gained popularity as the author of a number of instrumental pieces. It seemed that the career of a composer lay clearly mapped before him, but it was just at that time that doubts and misgivings assailed him. Writing short pieces was not enough for him and he felt he could not yet undertake a composition in extensive form. The study of the

scores of great masters made him feel his own inadequacy all the more keenly.

Once he confided his fears to Spendiarov.

"You are afraid of being a poor composer?" the old musician asked him. "But I have faith in you; I believe you can become a significant and powerful artist. You must study. Study the Russian classics, study the music of your own people, drink in the sounds of life—and work ceaselessly. . . ."

The encouraging words of an outstanding composer boosted Khachaturyan's spirits, filled him with faith in himself and made him apply to work with renewed zeal.

Upon graduating the Gnesin School in 1929 he began, on the advice of his teacher, to prepare for his entrance examinations to the Conservatoire. His studies were interrupted, however, early in the summer by his trip to Yerevan as a member of the Drama Studio of the House of Armenian Culture. Khachaturyan was commissioned to compose music to some of the plays the Studio was rehearsing and his first essays in this sphere proved successful. He liked the Armenian themes of the plays and the plain and forceful characters presented in them. He felt thrilled at the prospect of visiting the land of his fathers where new life was being built for the first time in the history of the Armenian people. The productions of the Armenian Drama Studio headed by Ruben Simonov, a well-known actor and director, were highly successful. The Studio played in Yerevan and went on tour of other cities. For the first time in his life Aram visited Armenia's rural districts where he got a close view of Armenian peasants' life, of their festivities, heard and recorded folk music as performed by the people.

Although it took Khachaturyan away from his studies, the trip to Armenia proved extremely beneficial to the young musician's development. He brought back to Moscow a wealth of new musical impressions and observations of life. Contact with his native soil brought him new creative powers, strengthened his faith in his talent and dispelled his doubts regarding the social significance of his calling as composer.

* * *

An important source of Khachaturyan's music is his fertile imagination, his rare gift for improvisation, the manifestation of his sensitive talent which reacts quickly to all and every impression. He was fond of

improvising at the piano while still a boy. As a student of the Gnesin Music School he used to immensely enjoy the regular concert-improvisations he gave at a kindergarten. Here is what Khachaturyan himself says about his experiences as teacher of music appreciation:

"I am very fond of children and there is nothing I enjoy more than being with my little friends. I still cherish the memory of my first modest pedagogical experience, my work as a musical instructor at a Moscow kindergarten. I came there three times a week and spent several hours with my little charges in a big room with a piano in it. I had no definite method, all I did was play musical games with the children. For instance, we made believe we went to the Zoo: I played short extempore 'pieces' and the children had to guess what animal I meant, and what mood it was in. I tried to depict in music a fearful lion, a good-natured elephant, a clever monkey, and so on. Then I organized the children in a percussion band and we even appeared at school concerts with invariable success. These musical games, as well as work at Y. Zavadsky's Drama Studio where I had to improvise music for scenic etudes, were a spur to my imagination."

In the spring of 1929 Khachaturyan successfully passed his entrance examinations to the Moscow Conservatoire. He made an excellent impression on the board of examiners both by his keen ear, memory and harmonic sense and by the fact that he was the author of instrumental pieces fairly popular with concert musicians.

At the beginning of the thirties, the Conservatoire in Moscow whose alumni include such musicians as Sergei Taneyev, Sergei Rachmaninov, Alexander Scriabin, Nikolai Medtner, Reinhold Gliere, Antonina Nezhdanova and Konstantin Igumnov, had outstanding musicians on its staff: the names of professors Igumnov, Alexander Goldenweiser, Heinrich Neuhaus and Abram Yampolsky were famous throughout the world. Nikolai Myaskovsky, the celebrated composer and pedagogue, played a prominent part in the education of young musicians bringing up several generations of Soviet composers.

The years Khachaturyan spent at the Conservatoire, where his teachers were M. Gnesin—composition, Sergei Vasilenko—orchestration and H. Litinsky—polyphony, were very fruitful. A few weeks after enrolment he composed his *Song-Poem* for violin and piano, a wonderful piece in the style of the art of *ashugs*. This highly poetic music imbued with exalted lyricism flows freely, like an improvisation. The melody is

supple and lavishly adorned with characteristically Oriental graces, the rhythms varied and fanciful, the general mood light and contemplative. The piece abounds in fresh harmonies and original devices of thematic development; the masterful treatment of the instruments brings their timbres close to those of the Armenian instruments, *tar* (plucked) and *kemancha* (bowed). First performed in 1929 by the violinist Gabrielyan, the *Song-Poem* soon became very popular both in the Soviet Union and abroad.

In those years the students of the Moscow Conservatoire spent much time in heated discussions of the ways of the development of Soviet music. A characteristic feature of the times was the appearance of numerous student unions and organizations within the Conservatoire.

Khachaturyan became a member of Prokoll, a student composers' group whose aim was to compose works in popular genre imbued with new revolutionary ideas. The group met to discuss new compositions; the discussions often became impassioned disputes on the theme uppermost in everybody's mind—the future of Soviet music.

At one such meeting Khachaturyan presented several pieces for violin and piano and a march for brass band. In the animated discussion that followed, his fellow-students approved the ardent emotionality of the music, the novelty of the harmonies and the plasticity of the themes.

A very useful branch of the Prokoll activities was their common work in arranging songs of the peoples of the U.S.S.R. Khachaturyan arranged a series of Turkmen and Armenian songs which were warmly acclaimed by his colleagues.

In 1930 he was put into Myaskovsky's class of composition.

"Long before I met Nikolai Yakovlevich Myaskovsky personally," Khachaturyan recalled, "I had heard much about him and known his music rather well. To us young musicians he seemed to be surrounded by a halo, we stood in awe of him. He was respected and venerated by everybody. Needless to say, it was considered the greatest honour imaginable to be his pupil, and although I cherished the dream of studying under him I had little hope it would ever come true. Once I confided my aspirations to Derzhanovsky, a music critic and friend of Myaskovsky. That winter I fell ill and spent many a weary day in the hospital. Imagine my joy when my friends brought me the news that I had been enrolled in Myaskovsky's class of composition! This acted as the most potent medicine and speeded up my recovery."

The dean of the Soviet school of symphony, excellent pedagogue and profound thinker, Myaskovsky watched his new pupil's creative seekings with great interest and understanding. He believed in Khachaturyan's talent from the start and, careful not to interfere with the creative personality of the young musician, he taught him more than just the difficult art of composition. By his own example of an exacting artist Myaskovsky fostered in his pupil the culture of creative work, he taught him to listen to life, to gain a better understanding of literature, dramatic art, painting and architecture.

Among the works Khachaturyan composed in Myaskovsky's class are his Sonata for violin and piano in two movements, his Trio for piano, violin and clarinet, *Dance Suite*, Suite for viola and piano, two marches for military band, about thirty arrangements of Armenian, Turkmen, Tatar and Russian folk songs, and finally—the First Symphony.

Khachaturyan has been attracted from the outset to folk-dance music. He has a keen sense of the music inherent in the plastic movements of the human body, he can hear music in dance and see dance in music. And his early instrumental pieces are full of the alluring dance rhythms of the Transcaucasian peoples, which had captivated his imagination when he lived in Tbilisi as a child. These rhythms permeate his piano, violin and cello concertos, his symphonies and chamber music, to say nothing of his ballets. The peculiarities of folk-dance music are to him a source on which he draws while inventing his own original rhythms, often of a very complicated pattern. Among his favourite devices are the combination of even and odd times and abrupt interference with the metric foundation of music, which never fails to act as a spur on the listener's attention.

The dance element is at its vividest in the symphonic *Dance Suite*. In the five parts of this joyous work the composer combines and elaborates themes of varied character borrowed from the treasure-trove of Armenian and Uzbek folk art. The first two parts of the suite are colourful pictures of Armenian folk life. Khachaturyan makes extensive use of orchestral polyphony to develop his themes freely and in the most varied ways, which gives him an infinite succession of colourful and elegant dance images throbbing with life and passion. The third, slow part is based on Uzbek dance tunes; cast in free improvisatory form, this rhapsody-like episode is an important contrasting element in the development of the whole. It is followed by a festive and dynamic *Uzbek March* (Part 4) and the finale, an impetuous and temperamental *Lez-*

ghinka in the style of Georgian folk dances but without the utilization of folklore themes.

Speaking of his work on the score of the *Dance Suite*, Khachaturyan recalls that Myaskovsky was keenly interested in it but refrained from interfering with the creative process. He let his pupil find his own solutions to the most important problems connected with the general idea and form of his composition. In the Suite Khachaturyan embodied his early musical impressions and utilized to a certain extent the methods of composers who had created orchestral music in the Oriental genre, in particular, A. Spendiarov.

"When Myaskovsky saw my Suite," Khachaturyan says, "he made several remarks, drawing my attention to the fact that my themes were not developed but merely enriched with new harmonies and orchestral colours. Another drawback was, to his mind, the rather static bass part."

While in his second year in Myaskovsky's class—in 1932—Khachaturyan composed the Trio for piano, violin and clarinet. This talented composition afforded full scope to his melodic inventiveness and his ability to develop the thematic nucleus with ease and freedom. Breathing the spirit of Transcaucasian songs and dances and reproducing in a masterful way the original timbres of Oriental folk instruments, this work is a valuable contribution to the modern chamber music repertoire. It has been published and re-published both in the Soviet Union and abroad.

Sergei Prokofiev noted the merits of Khachaturyan's Trio when he heard it in 1933 on a visit to Myaskovsky's class in the Moscow Conservatoire.

Here is a passage from Khachaturyan's reminiscences of Prokofiev pertaining to this episode.*

"Our tutor Nikolai Myaskovsky, an artist of much taste and discrimination, often used to talk to us about Prokofiev, citing examples from his works and demonstrating some of Prokofiev's methods of composing. And although Myaskovsky did not indulge in lavish praise of Prokofiev's music, one felt behind the quiet reserve of this fine musician a sincere admiration for the great artist who had opened up new musical horizons.

* *Sergei Prokofiev* (Autobiography, Articles, Reminiscences) Eng. ed., Moscow, p. 196.



Nikolai Myaskovsky and Aram Khachaturyan in 1935

Юбилейный спектакль балета в ознаменование
XXV годовщины Великой Октябрьской
социалистической революции

Премьера

ГАЯНЕ



Aram Khachaturyan and Nina Makarova, his wife, at the play-bill announcing the performance of *Gayaneh* in 1942.

"It is hence not hard to imagine our excitement when one day (in 1933) Myaskovsky announced that Prokofiev was coming to the Conservatoire and that he wished to hear the work of the students. Promptly at the appointed hour the tall figure of Prokofiev appeared in the doorway of the director's office. He came in talking animatedly to Myaskovsky and hardly noticing the looks of awe and curiosity with which we were regarding him. We were not a little nervous at the prospect of submitting our work to the judgement of this world-famous composer whose name was almost a legend to us.

"The audition began at once. The works of K. Makarov-Rakitin, Y. Biryukov, Y. Golubev, N. Makarova, T. Khrennikov were among those heard, including my own Trio for violin, clarinet and piano.

"I do not remember exactly what Prokofiev told us after the audition. I only remember that all his remarks were friendly, concrete and to the point.

"He liked my Trio and even asked me for the music to send to France. Needless to say, I was in the seventh heaven."

Prokofiev at once set Khachaturyan apart from the rest of his fellow-students. He took along with him to France Khachaturyan's Trio and a few other works of his, and soon the Trio was performed in Paris at a concert of the Triton chamber music society of which Prokofiev was one of the founders. That was probably the first performance of Khachaturyan's music abroad.

The shaping of a composer's personality, the formation of his own style is a complex and not easily observable process and that is why it is so important to learn from the composer himself about the process of his development, about the nature of his musical idiom, no matter how fragmentary his recollections may be.

This is what Khachaturyan has to say about his years of study at the Conservatoire:

"At that time my irresistible inner urge to invent, to think up new forms, was constantly at variance with the rather rigid demands of the classical schemes which we had to observe in our composition tasks. I believe that all young composers have to experience this struggle while mastering the technique of composition, but for me this inevitable conflict was further complicated by a desire to reconcile the principles of classical forms with the peculiarities of Oriental musical idiom.

"Take for instance my passion for the interval of the second, major

and minor: haven't I had trouble enough with my conservatoire masters and music critics over it! This discordant interval haunting me comes from the trio of the folk instruments consisting of the *tar*, *kemancha* and tambourine. I relish such sonorities and to my ear they are as natural as any consonance. But although Myaskovsky did not particularly like them, he understood that to me they came natural and made no attempt to crush my artistic individuality. He used to say: 'I like teaching a pupil who knows what he is after. I cannot decide for him. The important thing is what he hears within his head.'

"My penchant for static bass, too, comes from Oriental music and Myaskovsky was able, very gently and without violating my inclinations, to make me revise my attitude towards the 'bass problem.' Perhaps I am not always successful in solving this problem but I try never to lose sight of it."

From his early steps in composition, Khachaturyan has had a keen sense of harmony; that sense comes to him "from within, from ears to hands, and not vice versa," as he puts it. A melody is born in his consciousness surrounded by harmony; but we already know that this in-born harmonic sense of Khachaturyan's has now and again contradicted the accepted canons, expanding beyond the limits of the European system of major and minor modes.

These conflicts were especially acute at the time he worked on his First Symphony which marked his debut in the sphere of modern symphony. He overcame all the difficulties, and in 1934 the finished symphony was handed to the examining board as Khachaturyan's graduation work.

Myaskovsky supervised Khachaturyan's work on the Symphony but here again he did not in any way interfere with the young composer's creative ideas because he had a very high opinion of his creative individuality and wanted to protect him from routine class-room influences.

The Symphony marked the end of the first "student" period in Khachaturyan's work. It may be truly considered to present the best traits of Khachaturyan's style, at one and the same time giving a generalized and perfected expression to the seekings and aspirations of youth and bearing an unmistakable stamp of a mature master.

In this his first large-scale symphonic creation Khachaturyan made an attempt to solve in a manner of his own the very hard and truly novel task of composing a symphony on themes stemming from the national

art of the Transcaucasian peoples. The successful solution of this problem meant an important stage in the development not of Khachaturyan alone, and not of Armenian music alone—it proved an important event in the history of Soviet and world music.

In this Symphony, dedicated to the fifteenth anniversary of Soviet Armenia, Khachaturyan glorified new Armenia, its wondrous nature, its people, the joy of free creative work. This significant ideological content found expression in a fresh and original musical idiom through the varied colourful media at the command of a dramatic and highly emotional symphonic work. In this lies the importance of the Symphony as a genuinely novel work.

The leading idea of the Symphony—love of one's country—is expressed in the first movement, the longest of all. The slow introduction in the style of an epic narrative creates the atmosphere of Armenian life. Its main theme is reminiscent of the free and inspired improvisations of *ashugs*. The melodies of the introduction, "the quintessence of the entire work," to quote Khachaturyan's own words, play a very important part in the further development of this musical epic. Thus the agitated and impassioned melodic elements of the introduction give rise to a majestic and manful, if somewhat elegiac, theme stated for the first time by the cellos and basses. Then this theme is elaborated in a variety of ways and followed by contrasting themes whose melodic and rhythmical elements—curious to say—are derived from the main theme itself. The composer counterposes songful and sharply accented dance elements developing them polyphonically and building up a tense climax; then the tempestuously developing music gives place to a lyrically-contemplative and mild, lilting theme bringing to the listener's mind Armenia's beautiful scenery, the dances of the mountaineers, the enchanting songs of Armenian maidens.

The music of the second movement—a kind of nocturne—is very beautiful and expressive. One can imagine the "hero" of the first movement to be Man with strong impulses and violent passions, but the second movement seems to speak of the sunny, smiling and majestic nature of the Caucasus. The basic theme of the second movement is a captivatingly-beautiful song, first stated by the clarinet, then by the English horn, the oboe and strings. The unhurried development of the song theme is interrupted by an episode in the style of a highland dance, only to return again to paint a lyrical sunset landscape.

After the slow second movement woven of song motifs, the finale comes like a dazzlingly-brilliant kaleidoscope of fiery dance themes in the style of impetuous mountain lezghinkas. In this movement Khachaturyan gives free rein to his love of colourful and spicy orchestration in the true Oriental tradition, and of a complex fanciful combination of different rhythms. The music of the first two movements, too, is marked by these traits lending to it a gorgeous and theatrical character. It would be wrong, however, to see in this a striving after external colourist effects. A careful study of the score will show that the orchestral timbres are never employed as mere colours *per se*: they obey a certain inner logic of a peculiar dramaturgy of timbres. Khachaturyan's imagination is highly concrete—he cannot imagine music as an abstraction divorced from concrete timbres. With his inner ear he always hears a melody as performed by some instrument or a combination of instruments, and that is why he can note his orchestral music directly in the score, without resorting to the piano-score stage.

The First Symphony was first performed in the Large Hall of the Moscow Conservatoire on April 23, 1934, under the baton of Eugen Szenkar, the German conductor who lived in the Soviet Union at the time. The Symphony was a great success, and Khachaturyan was spoken of as one of the most promising young talents. The critics warmly acclaimed the new work not only as a signal achievement of the composer but as a highlight of modern symphonism.

In the autumn of that year Szenkar repeated the Symphony in a concert the programme of which included Chaikovsky's overture-fantasia *Romeo and Juliet* and Violin Concerto with Efrem Zimbalist as soloist.

Khachaturyan's Symphony gained him a diploma with honours and his name was written in letters of gold on the white marble plaque beside the names of the other outstanding Russian musicians who graduated from the Conservatoire in different years.

Soon after its Moscow *première* the Symphony was performed in other cities of the Soviet Union and abroad. The foreign press, too, gave the new Symphony a warm reception, noting its serious content, original themes, and the professional mastery in the treatment of material and orchestration.

In the spring of 1935 Maxim Gorky invited a group of Soviet composers to his country-house where Romain Rolland, the French writer and

music scholar, was staying with him at the time. Gorky, Romain Rolland and the composers had a long and unrestrained discussion of creative problems, folk art, and the friendship and collaboration of writers and composers. The composers, of whom Khachaturyan was one, spent the whole day at Gorky's—a cherished memory to keep.

The spring of 1936 brought Khachaturyan a new and pleasurable experience: he went to Leningrad to attend the *première* of his Symphony there. That was his first encounter with that big cultural centre, famous for its musical traditions and discriminating audiences, and he looked forward to it with excitement. He paid his first visit in Leningrad to Dmitry Shostakovich who heartily welcomed his Moscow colleague. They spent the evening together; Khachaturyan played his Symphony to his new friend, then Shostakovich sat at the piano and with unbelievable ease played at sight some passages from the score that had particularly struck him. That was the beginning of the life-long friendship of the two musicians.

The Symphony was a tremendous success, and Leningrad at once took Khachaturyan to its heart.

In his article published in the collection *Druzhba (Friendship)* in 1957 Shostakovich wrote:

"I remember very well the powerful impression made on me by the First Symphony first played in Leningrad under the direction of Stiedry. Khachaturyan had shown me the score before the performance and I was struck by the unusual wealth of melodies of the work, its vivid and masterful orchestration, the profound content of the music and its festive joyfulness. The music of the First Symphony is a hymn to beauty and joy of life. I remember that there were many musicians at the *première* who, like me, felt a surge of joy at the appearance of an outstanding and talented composer. I often go back in my memories to Khachaturyan's First Symphony and the feelings it evoked at the first hearing."



C H A P T E R

GRADUATION from the Conservatoire and his first successes on the concert stage marked a new and important milestone in Khachaturyan's life and career. Five years of study were left behind, and the young composer was now launched on his independent life in art. Leading Soviet musicians rested great hopes in Khachaturyan, expecting him to develop further the promising innovatory line that was so prominent in his First Symphony.

The composer says that he was keenly conscious of his responsibility to the musical public, although what was to be his road in modern music was not quite clear to him at the time.

Of one thing he was certain—he *had to seek*, to foster in himself the creative artist, a trail-blazer in art. He realized clearly that no search of new means of expression could be fruitful if it did not express the artist's sincere feelings, if it was divorced from the fertile soil of his national art. And we know that his first creative victories were due to just this sincerity of his seekings, to his artistic integrity.

Another very important event took place in Khachaturyan's life shortly before his graduation and the success of the Symphony: in Myaskovsky's class he met Nina Makarova, a young and talented composer and pianist; they became friends, and soon a more tender feeling sprang between them, and the young people were married. Nina Makarova who graduated from the Conservatoire in 1936 has ever since been his true helpmate, wise counsellor and unprejudiced critic. Indeed, there are few musicians whose opinion Khachaturyan values as highly as that of his discerning wife, endowed with a fine ear for music and excellent taste.

Upon graduation Myaskovsky suggested that Khachaturyan take a post-graduate course under his guidance. As a post-graduate, Khachaturyan attended his professor's lessons in order to study his teaching methods, helped him to correct the students' work, at the same time devoting his energies to composition: he was writing a new big work, his Piano Concerto.

Some of his friends wondered why the young composer who was not a pianist himself should write a piano concerto; they feared that the difficulties arising from specifically pianistic technique would prove too much for him. True enough, Khachaturyan was not a professional pianist, his mastery of the piano was based not on schooling but on the practice of spontaneous music-making. At the same time he possessed a good, if somewhat unorthodox, technique, and what is more, an inborn sense of the piano, of its potentialities. This is what evidently lies at the bottom of the originality of the technical devices found in his Piano Concerto.

The concerto style is native to Khachaturyan's gift; he is fond of rich colour effects, of full-blooded and temperamental virtuoso forms. And these features are very prominent in the Concerto. It would be wrong, however, not to see a great, truly symphonic idea behind this "feast of music." Khachaturyan's Piano Concerto is a work imbued with significant ideas and emotions. It is the assertion of *joie de vivre*, of happiness attained in struggle against the forces of evil; the glorification of free and strong man is the theme of this beautiful, original and vivid music. There is one more feature making the Concerto unique—the uncommon freshness and vividness of its idiom rooted in the melodies and rhythms of Armenian folk songs.

It was but natural that a young composer setting out to write a piano concerto should be faced with considerable difficulties. One of them, as the composer himself admits, was the danger of imitating the famous concertos by Liszt, Chaikovsky, Grieg and Rachmaninov. This fear, however, was groundless; Khachaturyan's Piano Concerto is free from imitativeness, although nobody would deny that the creative ideas of these great artists have exercised a beneficial influence on the work of the young composer.

The new ideas the progressive artist wanted to express demanded new expressive media. Khachaturyan never tried to pose as an explorer of new horizons and yet he has had his new and important say in modern music.

While working on the Piano Concerto Khachaturyan was greatly influenced by Prokofiev, who, during the first years after returning to the U.S.S.R. from abroad, often gave piano recitals of his own compositions in Moscow. Prokofiev's manful and brilliantly virtuoso playing used to carry away his listeners, and Khachaturyan heard him play not only at public concerts but also at Derzhanovsky's house, a centre of Moscow musicians. On one of these occasions he took the opportunity of showing to Prokofiev the sketches of his Piano Concerto.

As Khachaturyan wrote in his reminiscences of Prokofiev, "He did not hide his surprise at my ambitious undertaking. 'It is very difficult to write a concerto,' he said. 'A concerto must have ideas. I advise you to jot down all the new ideas as they occur to you without waiting for the thing as a whole to mature. Make a note of separate passages and interesting bits, not necessarily in the correct order. Later on you can use these as "bricks" to build the whole.'

"Each time we met, Prokofiev would ask me how my Concerto was progressing. He let me play parts of it to him, and gave me very useful pointers."

The Concerto was first performed in 1936, in the Small Hall of the Moscow Conservatoire. It was played by Alexei Klumov, a young pianist and Khachaturyan's fellow-student, and Berta Kozels who played the piano reduction of the orchestral part. On July 12 of that year Lev Oborin played the Concerto for the first time with orchestra under L. Steinberg's baton; the soloist succeeded in giving a brilliant interpretation of the new work, convincingly revealing all the beauty of it.

Both professional musicians and the public at large were enthusiastic about Khachaturyan's Concerto which its author dedicated to Lev Oborin; it was published in 1938 by the State Music Publishers and quickly found a permanent place for itself in the repertoires of many leading Soviet and foreign pianists. The years that have passed since have proved its intrinsic worth and established it as one of the best modern works in this genre.

The Concerto's scope and ideological conception make it a kind of symphony for piano solo and orchestra. It is a truly novel work abounding in live emotions and original finds in the treatment of the instrument. What imparts particular freshness to the music of the Concerto

are the same rhythmic "disturbances," or shifts, interrupting the smooth flow of music that are found in many other of his works. These shifts make his music turbulent, impetuous and acutely dynamic.

Its exceedingly varied and original rhythm is the Concerto's main-spring. The numerous episodes of different moods following one another are all active and volitional. The gorgeous beauty of expressive themes rooted deeply in Armenian and Azerbaijan folk music, the overwhelming elemental force of rhythm, the all-conquering temperament, are combined in this work with a broad and significant symphonic conception and brilliant virtuoso texture.

The joyful and virile main theme possessing a tremendous rhythmic drive determines the idea of the first movement. Its highly dynamic development derives from the daring progression of the acutely dissonant chords stating this theme. From its opening bars the Concerto grips the listener's attention, whose memory firmly retains its images, so original and yet so closely bound up with the folk music element.

In the first movement the classical sonata form is blended with purely Oriental improvisation; this is particularly apparent in the lyrical secondary theme in the style of a folk song, presenting a sharp contrast to the initial volitional mood. This enchanting theme is announced by the piano, without the orchestral accompaniment, and is not unlike a long free improvisation. The broadly-developed virtuoso cadenza preceding the return of the powerful "call" of the main theme is of a similar nature.

Clarity of intentions determined by the composer's conscious adherence to the realistic principle, together with free improvisation, are characteristic of Khachaturyan's style as a whole. This is what he has once said to the author of this book:

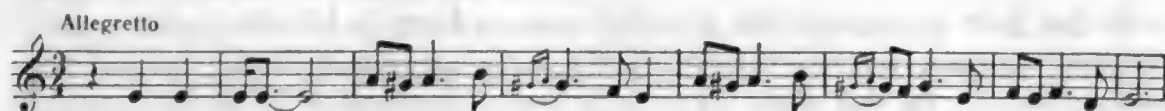
"My love of improvisation has its source in folk music. But this is an innate peculiarity of my individuality as a composer and should not be taken as a leaning towards an anarchic looseness of musical development. Improvisation is not blind wandering 'without compass or rudder' over the keyboard in search of 'spicy' sonorities. Improvisation is only good if you know exactly what you are after, what you want to find. It then acts as a spur on your imagination, as an impulse to creative thought, enabling you to build up a harmonious and balanced whole. Improvisation should go hand in hand with a sense of logic in the con-

struction of form determined as it is by the ideological conception of the work, by its content."

The Piano Concerto furnishes convincing proof of the fruitfulness of this method. It is undeniably manifest in the second movement, one of the most inspired pages in all of Khachaturyan's work. The music here develops from an exquisite song theme; profoundly meditative at first, it grows and expands, reaching the summit of tension in a powerful climax.

In the article "My Idea of the Folk Element in Music," already mentioned, Khachaturyan describes the process by which he arrived at this theme, one of his happy finds, through the elaboration of the melody of an unpretentious Armenian song:

"I found the main theme of the second movement of my Piano Concerto ... by means of subjecting to a drastic modification the tune of a 'light' Oriental urban song, very popular in its time, which I had heard in Tbilisi and which any inhabitant of the Transcaucasus knows very well." Here it is:



"But by changing it radically, by considerably developing it I have come to my theme":

Andante (con anima)



"It is a curious fact that even the Georgian and Armenian musicians I spoke to could not recognize its popular prototype, although a superficial analysis was enough to show that the two possessed common melodic elements."

The third and final movement of the Concerto is irresistible in its gaiety: in it the element of folk dance is at its most exuberant; the music charms the listener by its unrestrained flow of rhythm and riot of colours. Abruptly this sparkling, as if sun-lit, music is interrupted by a long lyrical episode of deep meditation. Again one hears the inspired improvisation, the unhurried recitative of the bard, reminiscent of the contemplative moods of the second movement. This episode is performed by the pianist alone. Then the lights flash up in the orchestra once more. The supple dance melody descends on the listener in an avalanche of orchestral colours. The dance carries him along to the grand coda, stating with renewed vigour the majestic main theme of the first movement and closing the Concerto on a jubilant and exultant note.

This is what Shostakovich wrote about Khachaturyan's Piano Concerto in the article mentioned previously:

"I heard it for the first time in the excellent performance by Lev Oberin. The Concerto marked considerable progress as compared with the First Symphony. For all its brilliant virtuosity, one felt that the Con-

certo had a profound idea behind it, and its symphonic scope was even greater than that of the First Symphony. In the Concerto Khachaturyan successfully combined the wealth of virtuosity with a richness of content."

The Piano Concerto won the immediate recognition of Soviet audiences and brought Khachaturyan world fame. It was particularly successful in Britain and America where it was performed by some of the best pianists.

The critics noted that Khachaturyan's Concerto was deservedly popular in Britain and, although his music showed the influence of the Moscow and Leningrad schools, the Concerto sounded astonishingly individual and very up-to-date. They further said that Khachaturyan's music, based largely on the elements of Armenian folklore, was reminiscent of Rimsky-Korsakov (especially in the slow movement), and that, altogether, it was typically Russian, highly worth while the effort to perform, and very individual.

After the Boston *première* of the Concerto by William Kapell, Serge Koussevitsky sent a message of congratulations to Moscow, saying that the performance had been a real triumph of the composer and the young pianist.

The next to play the Concerto in America was Artur Rubinstein, one of the world's greatest pianists. For several months the two pianists toured the U.S.A. competing in the performance of the Soviet composer's work and the critics jokingly remarked that the American public became Khachaturyan-conscious, and his name had gained wide popularity in America.

Recordings of Khachaturyan's Piano Concerto have been made by several British, American and German firms.

While working on extensive symphonic compositions Khachaturyan continued to write short vocal pieces. As a student he composed the *Red Sailors' Song* and *The Song of Komsomol Miners* for voice and piano. In 1936 the film *Pepo* drew full houses in Moscow, Yerevan and other Soviet cities. The theme was borrowed from the play of Armenian classical playwright G. Sundukyan and the music was by Khachaturyan.

The touching song of *Pepo* composed in the spirit of Armenian folk music became so popular in Armenia as to be regarded almost as a folk song. Many years after the release of *Pepo*, Khachaturyan on tour in Armenia happened to hear some collective farmers working in a vineyard sing this song. He asked them what it was they were singing, and they told him it was "a very old folk song."

After *Pepo* Khachaturyan wrote music for the film *Zangezur* dealing with Armenians' struggle for national independence; the *Zangezur March* from this film enjoyed wide popularity, and the composer later scored it for brass band.

In 1937 he wrote his *Song about Stalin*, a patriotic work to the words of an Azerbaijan folk poet, Mirza of Taus. The composer embodied his idea in a beautiful and expressive melody, and the whole *Song*, broad and turbulent, flows freely and uninterruptedly. The *Song* for mixed chorus and orchestra forms the concluding episode in the symphonic *Poem about Stalin* which was first performed in Moscow in November 1938.

The *Poem* is a kind of one-movement symphony with the short choral episode crowning the whole work. The symphonic development proceeds from the inspired theme of the *Song* which is heard in the introductory part, and the elements of which are elaborated in the long development sections leading to the final chorus. The themes and composition of the *Poem* are notable for their organic unity. The dynamic development that builds up to the majestic chorus glorifying the victories of the Socialist Revolution, is especially impressive.

* * *

By the end of the thirties A. Khachaturyan came to be considered one of the leading Soviet composers. His works formed staple items of symphonic programmes both in the concert halls and over the air, they were published in the Soviet Union and abroad. As his prestige and the popularity of his music grew, Khachaturyan's sphere of social activities widened. In 1937 he was elected Deputy Chairman of the Moscow branch of the Union of Soviet Composers, and in 1939 with the formation of the Organizing Committee of the U.S.S.R. Union of Soviet Composers he became its Deputy President.

In the early spring of 1939 Khachaturyan left Moscow for the land of his fathers, Armenia. The aim of his trip was to make a thorough study of Armenian musical folklore and to collect folk-song and dance tunes for *Happiness*, a ballet he planned to compose. Khachaturyan spent nearly six months in Armenia, working assiduously on the score of the new ballet, meeting Armenian artists and touring the country in search of folk melodies. While composing the ballet he maintained close contact with the Spendiaryov Opera and Ballet Theatre in Yerevan.

Armenia, the land of mountains, blooming orchards and turbulent streams, is unique in its beauty. Its capital, Yerevan, is a wonderful city combining as it does ancient architecture with magnificent modern buildings. Recent decades have seen the appearance in Yerevan of a great number of imposing new edifices—theatres, museums, institutes and government buildings. These buildings faced in soft pink tuff form architectural ensembles, blending harmoniously with the picturesque mountain scenery surrounding the city.

A trip to Lake Sevan—a placid expanse of blue water—lying high in the mountains and spreading over an area of about six hundred square miles, is an unforgettable experience. The mountain slopes and valleys are clothed in orchards, vineyards, citrus plantations. . . .

Armenia is rich in monuments of classical architecture preserving to our days the lofty and austere national tradition, inseparable from the Armenian people's history and blending so well with the surrounding landscape.

Khachaturyan's long stay in Armenia brought him a wealth of vivid impressions. His communion with Armenia's national culture and musical practice proved for him a real school, or as he put it himself, "a second conservatoire": he learned quite a lot, saw and heard many things anew, and at the same time he had an insight into the tastes and artistic requirements of the Armenian people. The musical impressions which had so influenced the mind of Khachaturyan the boy and the youth presented themselves in a new light to Khachaturyan the mature artist.

At the time Khachaturyan was writing his ballet he tried not to let a day pass without listening to the playing of a folk musician, the singing of an inspired *gusan*, seeing and hearing a national ensemble of instrumentalists or singers and dancers. Folk musicians flocked to his house in Yerevan and performed for his benefit their impassionate dance tunes and hauntingly beautiful songs. In his own words Khachaturyan "absorbed these live musical impressions like a sponge."

The composer gave himself up heart and soul to his ballet. In a very short time he wrote the score of a long ballet in three acts, an entrancing suite of Oriental dances. He had to make haste, for the theatre was preparing for the ten-day festival of Armenian art and literature to be held in Moscow in the autumn of that same year.

The libretto of the ballet was written by G. Oganesyanyan; its plot depicted the life of an Armenian collective farm situated near the state

border. There were scenes of seeing young men off to the Red Army, of the hero's encounter with an enemy who tried to cross the border, of the wounded frontier-guard returning to his collective farm, and of his wedding feast. Although affording the composer unlimited possibilities in utilizing folk-dance tunes, the libretto proved lax dramaturgically and did not provide for the development of the main characters. Yet Khachaturyan was able to turn it to a good use and compose a number of dance episodes showing skill and imagination. Some of his dances were genuine folk tunes symphonically developed. Altogether, the score includes rhythmic and melodic patterns of seven Armenian dances, a Russian dance, the Ukrainian hopak and the Georgian lezghinka. The two suites comprising the best items from the *Happiness* ballet soon became concert favourites.

Happiness was performed at the Spendiarov Opera and Ballet Theatre in Yerevan in September 1939. On October 24, 1939, the Spendiarov Theatre showed the ballet on the stage of the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow as part of the ten-day festival of Armenian art.

The libretto's serious drawbacks prevented Khachaturyan from creating adequate symphonic music that would give a generalized expression to the idea and present the characters in development. The haste with which the composer worked so as to have the score ready by the autumn could not but tell on some parts of the ballet, and shortly after its Moscow *première*, Khachaturyan applied himself to revising his work. Before he finished the revised version of the ballet the composer completed two new works which became popular in the Soviet Union and abroad; these were the Violin Concerto and incidental music to Lermontov's play *Masquerade*.

Work on *Happiness* and participation in the festival of Armenian art had brought Khachaturyan still closer to Armenia's spiritual life and culture. With renewed interest he studied classical Armenian literature, as well as the works of contemporary Armenian writers, composers and painters. In Yerevan he made friends with Avetik Isaakyan, the poet, Martiros Saryan, the painter, Aro Stepanyan and Armen Tigranyan, the composers, and with many other Armenian intellectuals.

The Armenian people elected Khachaturyan to the Supreme Soviet of the Armenian S.S.R., and in 1939 the highest honour in the U.S.S.R.—the Order of Lenin—was conferred on him. His services to Soviet music won Khachaturyan the title of Merited Artist of the R.S.F.S.R.

It is characteristic of Khachaturyan's artistic personality to have a variety of interests, to be eager to try his hand at different musical genres and forms. Thus while composing significant symphonic and ballet works he went on writing music for films and plays. After the success which had attended his music for the films *Pepo* and *Zangezur*, Khachaturyan composed excellent music for the films *The Garden* and *Salavat Yulayev* and for the plays *The Valencian Widow*, *Masquerade* and *The Kremlin Chimes*.

Love of the theatre and a keen sense of the scenic image are inherent in Khachaturyan. He thrills to the work of giving a musical interpretation of a dramatic subject, of portraying scenic situations and the characters' emotions in his music.

"I love the theatre and the cinema," the composer says. "I love composing music to a concrete dramaturgic plan determined by the idea of the play and the director's interpretation of it. Work like this is very important to one because the stage, the plot, the film, the live image as conceived by the actor help me to give shape to my musical ideas, make my work more concrete and the form richer."

One of the most popular of Khachaturyan's works—popular not only with serious-music lovers but with the broad radio audiences, student youth and representatives of all strata of society—is his symphonic suite *Masquerade* from incidental music to Lermontov's play of the same title. Khachaturyan wrote this score in 1940 for the Vakhtangov Theatre production in Moscow. He admits he was somewhat awed by the idea of composing music to this play, and not only because Lermontov's great creation presented immense difficulties to the interpretation of its romantic content and conflicting passions in music, but also because music for Meyerhold's famous production of the play in 1917 had been written by Glazunov himself.

Khachaturyan began by making a thorough study of the works of the old and forgotten Russian composers who lived before Glinka's time. This introduced him into the atmosphere of old St. Petersburg and filled his mind with the music of the period. In order the better to understand the inner world of his characters, Khachaturyan attended the reading of the play at the Vakhtangov Theatre and had talks with R. Simonov, the director.

As a result, music was assigned a very important part in the production, largely determining its inner rhythm and emotional colouring. Khachaturyan's score consisted of several apt orchestral fragments, dances

and the agitated Romance of Nina. The splendid Waltz is the focal point of the score; it is a psychologically convincing presentation of the dramatism of the action and of the agitated emotional state of the characters. Its precipitous motion, enchanting melody, its gorgeous and somewhat acrid harmonies and orchestration are in perfect keeping with the imagery and emotional atmosphere of the drama. In this Waltz Khachaturyan proved himself a worthy successor to the splendid Russian waltz tradition first begun in Glinka's masterful *Waltz-Fantasy* and later continued by Chaikovsky and Glazunov.

The incidental music to the *Masquerade* has been put into an orchestral suite which, besides the Waltz, includes a Nocturne, Mazurka, Romance and Galop. The *Masquerade* suite is considered one of the best works of Soviet music for popular symphonic programmes. Some of its items (Waltz, Mazurka, Galop) have been arranged for piano, accordion, folk instruments orchestra, etc. The Suite is incorporated in the repertoires of many symphony orchestras abroad, and has been recorded in Czechoslovakia, the U.S.A., France, England and Germany.

The Valencian Widow Suite in six parts made up of music to Lope de Vega's play is also a work of considerable artistic value. The music was originally composed for the production of the play at the Lenin Komsomol Theatre in Moscow. The Suite is brilliantly orchestrated and charged with Spanish folk melodies and rhythms. Each of its parts is an independent piece in the style of a folk song or dance. The central item is the *Song*, based on an expressive and supple melody ingeniously elaborated. The Suite closes with a tempestuous and temperamental dance of the fandango type.

* * *

Khachaturyan combined an active public life with his work on new compositions. As Deputy President of the Organizing Committee of the Union of Soviet Composers he was the virtual head of the country-wide organization of composers uniting on a broad platform hundreds of composers and musicologists from all the Soviet republics. The Organizing Committee activities were many and varied, such as holding discussions on vital creative problems, appraising new works, launching young talent, promoting the welfare of its members, arranging for the printing and copying of music, organizing medical aid, etc.

The Ruza Composers' Home for creative work founded in 1939 was one of the Organizing Committee's important undertakings. The Union of Soviet Composers was allotted a big plot of land on the high woody bank of the Moskva River not far from the town of Staraya Ruza. A number of comfortable cottages were built in the dense pine forest, and composers could come here to work and rest. The picturesque scenery of Moscow Region, the quiet of country life, were highly conducive to creative endeavour.

Khachaturyan and his family spent the summer of 1940 in the Ruza Home. He did not come there for a rest though, or to enjoy the beautiful country and the good air. He brought with him some sketches for a violin concerto and intended to devote the summer months to its composition. The full plan for the Concerto was ready in his head, he knew what the main themes were to be like, he even heard them with his inner ear.

Recalling his first stay at Ruza, Khachaturyan notes the atmosphere of intense creative work that reigned there.

"I worked without an effort, sometimes my thoughts and imagination outraced the hand that was covering the staves with notes. The themes came to me in such abundance that I had a hard time of it putting them in some sort of order."

Two and a half months later Khachaturyan returned to Moscow with a ready score of the Violin Concerto, a work that was to mark a new big triumph of Soviet art, a new and very important step in the career of its composer.

The part played by the instrumental works of the best Soviet composers in the development of the Soviet piano, violin and cello schools is undoubtedly very important. Suffice it to mention the names of S. Prokofiev, N. Myaskovsky, R. Gliere, D. Shostakovich and D. Kabalevsky. And speaking of the modern instrumental concerto, we cannot omit mention of the three works in this genre by Aram Khachaturyan: his Piano, Violin and Cello concertos.

Close contact with David Oistrakh, the outstanding Soviet violinist whom Khachaturyan consulted in the process of work on the Violin Concerto, proved extremely fruitful. The Concerto is dedicated to Oistrakh, its first performer, who gave it profound study and interpreted it with warm feeling and enthusiasm. The *première* took place in Moscow on November 16, 1940, during a festival of Soviet music. This talented, optimistic and brilliantly virtuoso work got an enthusiastic

reception from both professional musicians and Soviet music-lovers at large. They saw in it a worthy continuation of the fruitful trend in Soviet music started in Khachaturyan's earlier works.

"While composing the Concerto," Khachaturyan recalls, "I had for my models such unattainable masterpieces of world violin literature as the concertos by Mendelssohn, Brahms, Chaikovsky and Glazunov. I wanted to create a virtuoso piece employing the symphonic principle of development and yet understandable to the general public."

He succeeded in what he set out to do; from the first bars the music of the Concerto attracts one with its festive colours and fiery temperament. The work is rich in beautiful, appealing melodies and lilting dance tunes. Without quoting folk melodies, the concerto is imbued with the spirit of Armenian song. It is easy to understand and its melodies are readily remembered. Whether a broad melody or expressive recitative, a precipitous and graceful dance or the imperative call of the introduction—each of its musical images is full of life, of exuberant health and expressive of a full-blooded and optimistic outlook.

In the first movement the composer counterposes two contrasting and yet stylistically related song and dance themes. The introduction, brief but very determined and energetic, at once arrests the listener's attention. This oratorical phrase recurs on numerous occasions throughout the work.

The powerful chords in the orchestra are followed by the solo violin with a very characteristic, sharply accented theme imbued with youthful ardour. This simple melody, based on a concise rhythmic figure, proves exceptionally rich in potentialities for further development. With a master's hand Khachaturyan derives a graceful dance tune from this initial motor rhythmic pattern which is, in fact, the kernel of the principal subject. From the first statement of this entrancing theme the solo instrument is afforded broad opportunities for displaying its virtuoso and colour possibilities. At the same time the orchestral part is not relegated to the background; it is developed in a variety of polyphonic devices, rich and piquant harmonies and resilient "flying" rhythms.

The secondary, songful theme is highly poetic and tender, it is close in spirit to the lyrical passages of the Piano Concerto. The secret of the enchantment of this captivating melody lies in the composer's sense of the essence of folk-song lyricism.

Further development of the flow of music is based on the juxtaposition of the elements from the first—vigorous and driving, and second—songful

and lyrical, themes. The dynamics of the Concerto's dramatic idea is enfolded through this juxtaposition of the contrasting musical images. The extended virtuoso cadenza utilizing mainly the elements of the secondary theme is the direct continuation of the passionate dialogue between the solo violin and the orchestra. Then the initial themes return and the entire movement, restless and bubbling with energy, closes with a festive concluding episode reminiscent of the powerful theme of the introduction.

An unhurried and meditative song in the bassoon opens the second movement. This is not so much a song as a recitative in the style of the *ashugs'* improvisations; the clarinet then catches up the melody, only to be interrupted by several astringent chords, then one more phrase from the bassoon—and a bewitching and inspired melody emerges out of the depths of a slow waltz movement, evoking lyrical dreams and bringing to mind the soothing pictures of slumbering nature, a perfumed summer night. The melody, first stated by the solo violin, expands and overflows, accompanied by expressive auxiliary melodies in the clarinets, flutes and strings. The broad central episode of the second movement is in the nature of an excited recitative. After the passionate upsurge of turbulent improvisation comes the main songful theme in the violin's lower register, which makes it particularly expressive. Then it is taken up by the whole orchestra.

The third movement is all gay festivity and brilliant virtuosity. In point of form it is a kind of rondo with the lively and graceful dance theme recurring again and again. The theme has a folk-dance origin. The long and lyrical middle section interrupting this precipitous movement is again a recitative improvisation. The interruption is, however, of a short duration and soon the scintillatingly-gay and jubilant first theme comes into its own again. With consummate mastery, in intricate polyphonic combinations, Khachaturyan merges the dance themes of the rondo with the elegiac melody from the first movement, dramatically uttered by the cellos.

The brilliant conclusion sparkles with all the colours of the orchestra. The impulsive main theme of the first movement serves to unify the work with its wealth of varied emotions into a constructive whole. This excellent Concerto, certainly one of Khachaturyan's best and most inspired works, ends on a note of exultant joy.

Soviet music-lovers and critics were unanimous in their appreciation of Khachaturyan's Violin Concerto, and it met with the same reception

abroad. It was performed with outstanding success by several of the leading violinists in Britain, such as Max Rostal, Thomas Matthews, Henry Holst, and the critics acclaimed it as a brilliant work in which a happy conception had found an unusually lush and finished realization, and commented on its poetry, temperament, wealth of melodies and exceptional rhythmic freedom.

Among the foreign artists who played the Concerto were the great Rumanian musician Georges Enescu, the Polish violinist Henryk Szeryng, the Belgian—Carlo Van Neste, and the Americans—L. Kaufman, Carol Glenn, and Elie Spivak.

Khachaturyan's Violin Concerto is extra proof of the fact that modern music (modern in the strictest sense of the term) can win popularity with broad democratic audiences and yet remain original and new. A searching and original composer, Khachaturyan does not strive to obey the dictates of modernistic fashion. He is fully aware of his duty as a humanist artist, of his responsibility to his people and to his art. That is why, unlike some composers who, faced with the audience's indifference to their work, haughtily declare that they are writing the "music of the future," Khachaturyan composes for his contemporaries. He addresses himself to them and from them he expects a response.

Such of his works as the Piano and the Violin concertos, inspired as they are with noble humanist ideas and expressing a passionate love of life, are a source of deep artistic enjoyment to thousands of listeners who are alert to every manifestation of real talent.

Khachaturyan composed his Violin Concerto six years after his graduation from the Conservatoire. This period was one of major achievements in all spheres of Soviet music. It brought the world such works as the Sixteenth and Twenty-first symphonies by Myaskovsky, the Fifth and Sixth symphonies and Piano Quintet by Shostakovich, the *Romeo and Juliet* ballet and the *Alexander Nevsky* Cantata by Prokofiev, the symphony-cantata *On the Kulikovo Field* by Shaporin, the operas *And Quiet Flows the Don* by Dzerzhinsky, *Colas Breugnon* by Kabalevsky and *In Storm* by Khrennikov.

Along with the older, acknowledged masters, young Soviet musicians, representatives of the multi-national art of all the republics, also began to take an active part in the development of Soviet music. For the first time in the many ages of their history, the peoples of Central Asia advanced from their midst professional composers of talent who wrote the

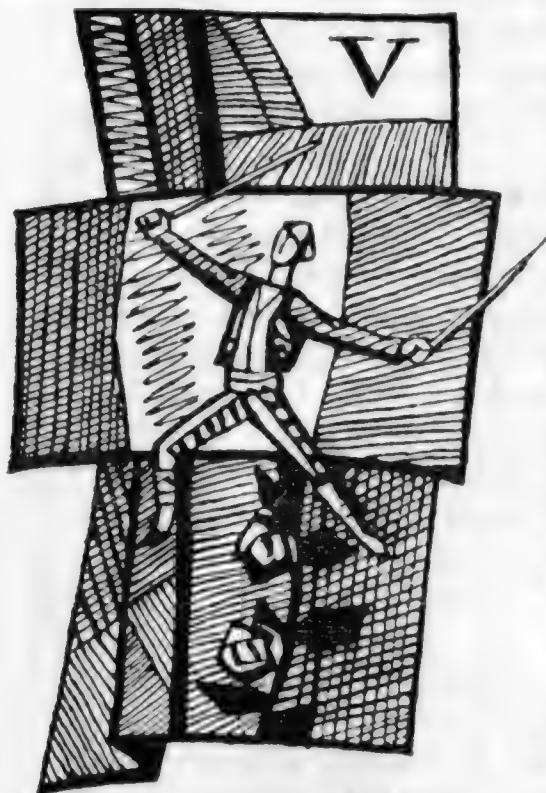
first national Kirghiz, Kazakh, Uzbek and Tajik operas, ballets, symphonies and extended choral works. The creative endeavours of Georgian, Azerbaijan and Armenian composers in all musical genres were particularly successful. The new works demonstrated at national festivals held annually in Moscow were always enthusiastically welcomed by the Soviet public.

The ten-day festivals of Ukrainian, Georgian, Azerbaijan, Armenian and Uzbek art held in Moscow in the late thirties showed the achievements in national musical art of these peoples of the U.S.S.R. The appearance of significant musical works in a number of Soviet republics was accompanied by the successes of Soviet pianists, violinists, cellists and singers at U.S.S.R. and international contests.

Khachaturyan was always in the thick of the fast-moving artistic life around him; he participated in the discussions held by the Union of Soviet Composers, and gave much of his time and energy to the Music Section of the House of Armenian Culture.

The Violin Concerto appeared in 1940 and brought its author an immediate and universal success. In 1941 Khachaturyan was awarded the Stalin Prize, second degree, for it.

As the years passed and his popularity grew, Khachaturyan became even more exacting towards himself and his work. Looking back on what he had composed, Khachaturyan felt that he would like to revise thoroughly his ballet *Happiness*, which, he felt, lacked in dramatic tenacity. As he discussed it with some of the leading members of the ballet company of the Kirov Opera and Ballet Theatre in Leningrad, Khachaturyan hit upon the plan of composing a new ballet on an Armenian subject with a partial utilization of dance episodes from *Happiness*. He approached K. Derzhavin, a Leningrad playwright, who readily agreed to write the libretto for the new ballet which was to be called *Gayaneh*. Khachaturyan was enthusiastic about this new libretto, and with his wonted ardour was ready to plunge into work. But the new ballet was not completed and staged before the end of 1942.



C H A P T E R

THE SUMMER of 1941 brought the Soviet people the ordeal of war. The entire country rose up in arms to repulse the enemy. Soviet composers, too, were carried along on the tide of patriotism. From the first days of the war they bent their efforts on serving their country, and the annals of those years have preserved the names of many composers and musicians who selflessly carried their art to the soldiers in the trenches. Many of them died as heroes on the battle-field.

In spite of all the difficulties, the war years witnessed great achievements in Soviet music. Early in the war, Soviet composers wrote a number of excellent mass patriotic songs

which played a very important part in mobilizing and consolidating the patriotic forces, and inspiring Soviet soldiers to heroic deeds for their country's freedom and happiness. This militant spirit was present not only in songs, but also in the many large-scale compositions vividly embodying the theme of the country's defence and of the struggle against fascism.

From the first days of the war the Central Composers' Club in Moscow became a headquarters of the mass patriotic song. From morning till night composers and poets flocked here bringing music and words of new songs and marches. The music was heard at the Commission of Defence Music, and the best of the songs were quickly copied and dispatched to military units, to concert groups and to the Radio Committee.

Khachaturyan was an active member of the Defence Music Commission of the Union of Soviet Composers, taking part in the selection of new compositions and giving performances of his own new songs at military units and hospitals. When Hitler's aviation began its air-raids on

Moscow in the summer of 1941, Khachaturyan, together with other members of the Union of Soviet Composers, did fire duty on the roof of the ten-storey building in Third Miuskaya Street, housing the offices of the Composers' Union and living quarters of many of Moscow composers and musicologists.

During that period Khachaturyan composed several war songs and marches, including the well-known dramatic *Song of Captain Gastello*, gloryfying the heroic deed of the Soviet flier who steered his own burning machine down on to the enemy's motor transport column, and an excellent march for brass band *To the Heroes of the Patriotic War*. These were performed at front-line concerts and promptly taken up by the Soviet soldiers.

Mass songs and military marches constituted a sizable part in the work of all Soviet composers in those grave and trying days. These popular genres were most effective in accomplishing their aim—that of inspiring the Soviet people to deeds of valour in the name of saving humanity from Hitlerite barbarians.

At the same time Soviet composers continued to work in the field of extended forms. Shostakovich, for example, wrote three movements of his famous Seventh Symphony in besieged Leningrad, Prokofiev started work on his patriotic opera *War and Peace*, after the great novel by Lev Tolstoi; works filled with the spirit of anti-fascist struggle came from under the pens of Myaskovsky, Shaporin, Gliere, Kabalevsky, Koval, and many other Soviet composers.

Khachaturyan was one of the first to hear Shostakovich's *Leningrad Symphony*: on his way to Kuibyshev from Leningrad, blockaded by the Hitlerites, Shostakovich visited Khachaturyan in his Moscow flat and played to him the three movements of the new Symphony he had completed. In conversation with the author of this book Khachaturyan said that the impression Shostakovich's music had made on him was truly staggering.

"I shall never forget that evening. Moscow blacked out, watchful search-lights sweeping the black autumnal sky, and Shostakovich at the piano. His music seemed a stirring tale about the frightful and heroic deeds happening on earth at the time, about our country and the Soviet people."

Late in the spring of 1941 Khachaturyan left for Perm where the Leningrad Kirov Opera and Ballet Theatre had been moved, to start



The Khachaturyan family and Dmitry Shostakovich with his children at the Ivanovo Composers' Home in the summer of 1943



Girls' Dance (the Harvest Home scene) from *Gayaneh* at the Bolshoi Theatre

Sabre Dance





**Aram Khachaturyan's meeting with the village amateur choir
in Bunyatino, Moscow Region**

work on the score of the *Gayaneh* ballet. The composer was wholly taken up with this work; the grand theme of a determined and optimistic people rallying in the face of the enemy was a powerful source of inspiration to him. In the different scenes depicting the life of a border-line Armenian collective farm, in the conflict and clash of powerful personalities, in the affirmation of the exalted truth of life and the unmasking of evil and violence, the composer sensed a "through-going action," a single patriotic idea, which inspired him to create vivid and truly symphonic music.

The company of the theatre for whom the ballet was being composed watched the progress of his work with eagerness and understanding. The ballet was produced by Nina Anisimova, a talented ballerina and choreographer. Each new scene, each new item of the score which the orchestra mastered, showed with increasing clarity the artistic value of the new work. At last the long rehearsal period came to an end, and on December 3, 1942, the long-awaited *première* of *Gayaneh* took place, bringing a great and well-merited success to both composer and theatre. In the spring of 1943 Khachaturyan was awarded a Stalin Prize, first degree, for the ballet.

The composer used the music of his ballet for three long orchestral suites which became very popular with Soviet and foreign concert-goers. Some items from these suites, especially the fiery *Sabre Dance*, in various arrangements and transcriptions, now rank among the favourite pieces of popular music in all countries of the world. The virtuoso transcription of some pieces from *Gayaneh* made for two pianos by Adolph Gottlieb is also invariably successful wherever it is played.

The music from the ballet *Happiness* was freely used in the score of the new ballet (individual episodes, some dances and leitmotifs). But the unfolding of the new plot demanded quite a different solution in music, the introduction of a number of new scenes, long symphonic episodes and new dances. Thus *Happiness* became dissolved in the new and much more perfect work and actually ceased to exist, superseded by *Gayaneh*. Its profoundly national character, uniformity of idiom, singleness of symphonic idea, exceptionally colourful orchestration, have won this work a place of honour in the treasury of Soviet and world ballet music.

The scene of the ballet is laid in an Armenian collective farm, shortly before and in the first days of the Great Patriotic War. Scene I, opening

after a short orchestral introduction, brings the spectators into an atmosphere of joyful creative work of the collective-farm cotton-pickers. Musically, the scene is based on the variation of the well-known Armenian song *The Vine*.

The ballet captivates one from the start with its joy of life, expressed in music, with the bright beauty of the scenery and the enchanting movements of the girls performing a poetic work dance.

Scene I introduces all the main characters of the musical-choreographic work. Among them are Gayaneh, a fragile Armenian woman endowed with great spiritual strength, Ghiko, her husband, a malicious and brutal man who feels a stranger among the collective farmers and who later betrays his country; merry Armen, Gayaneh's brother, Nuneh, her friend, and Nuneh's beloved, Karen. Each personage is characterized by expressive and easily recognizable music.

The first act presents the main characters and introduces the plot, the beginning of the struggle between the forces of good and evil, between Gayaneh and Ghiko, the traitor.

The dramatic emotions of Gayaneh insulted and ill-treated by her husband, her protest and struggle which all but spelled death for her at the hand of the traitor, her pure love for the Russian officer Kazakov—all this finds a vivid and forceful expression in the music. Gayaneh's part is a splendid example of Khachaturyan's dramaturgic skill, of his ability to reveal convincingly through music the complex evolutions of his heroine's character. Her lyrical dances (Variation in Scene I), her highly dramatic scene with Ghiko and her lyrical duet with Kazakov, are really superb.

Gayaneh's personal drama develops against the background of life on the collective farm presented in its various aspects—in work, festive rites and impetuous dances in leisure time, and also in the dramatic scene of the fire, etc.

The poetic music for the carpet-weavers' scene (the opening of Act II), based on the masterful elaboration of an old Armenian folk-song theme, is one of the composer's happiest finds. Scene I of Act III, depicting the camp of nomadic Kurds, with their temperamental and fiery dances, is also rich in expressive music. The scene of the quarrel between Armen and the young Kurd Izmail is accompanied by excellent symphonic music. The dramatic climax of the ballet is the scene of the fire, the exposure of Ghiko's treachery and his attempt to murder Gayaneh. The

music, reaching the peak of tension, is of a tragic nature and leaves a strong and lasting impression.

Act IV is a festive apotheosis sparkling with all the colours of folk art; it affirms the patriotic idea of the whole work, glorifies labour and love of one's country. Here the composer has used several dances from *Happiness*, such as the *Dance of Old Men*, the Armenian dances *Shalakh* and *Uzundara*, the Georgian *Lezghinka*, the *Russian Dance* and the Ukrainian *Hopak*.

The first production of *Gayaneh*, staged in difficult war-time conditions by the talented ballet company of the Kirov Opera and Ballet Theatre, was a major achievement of the Soviet ballet. The public and press were enthusiastic about it, the latter noting in particular the skill and imagination displayed by its producer, N. Anisimova, and the excellent ensemble. The performers of the main roles were on top of their form. These were N. Dudinskaya, T. Vecheslova and A. Shelest-Gayaneh; F. Balabina-Nuneh; A. Sergeyev and S. Kaplan-Armen, and B. Shavrov-Ghiko. The artist N. Altman created splendid *décor* in perfect accord with the style and spirit of the work. The orchestra led by the experienced conductor P. Feldt, was also at its best.

Gayaneh as produced by the Kirov Theatre has stood the test of time, and is to this day one of the most popular ballets in its repertoire. The ballet is an outstanding success with the spectators of the State Opera Theatre in Berlin (German Democratic Republic), in Bratislava, Ostrava, Sofia, and other cities.

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Khachaturyan's career is in many respects different from those of Prokofiev, Kabalevsky, Shostakovich and Shebalin. His composer's personality was shaped under entirely different conditions, in a distinct national and social environment. He took up music as a profession when he was a grown man. In the course of a few short years he had to master those fundamentals of professional musicianship which his conservatoire friends had been acquiring for a much longer period, since early childhood. Connoisseur of world musical literature that he is, Khachaturyan admits that the process of acquainting himself with the works of great masters was rather haphazard; he came to know and love the music of the French Impressionists before he heard the works of the great sixteenth- and seventeenth-century masters of polyphony; he was familiar with Scriabin, Grieg and Wagner before he studied the scores of Beeth-

oven and Chaikovsky. His teachers M. Gnesin and N. Myaskovsky had no little trouble in trying to establish some kind of system and order in their talented pupil's study of musical literature.

To some extent these unusual conditions under which Khachaturyan acquired his knowledge of world music must have influenced the shaping of his artistic individuality. Some explanation may be found here of the peculiarities of Khachaturyan's symphonism—his love of colour, his penchant for the dramatic and for certain emotional exaggeration. His symphonic works written at different times invariably present a conflict between free improvisation and a deep sense of the laws of classical sonata form, a respect for the artistic tradition of the past and an unsatiable urge to find something new, whether in the sphere of harmony or orchestration.

"All my life I have striven to invent my own melodies, my own harmonies and rhythms, my own orchestral devices. I have always wanted to be a composer-inventor. My life's ambition is to say my own word in music," Khachaturyan says.

For all the difference in genre, ideas, emotional content and form, the First Symphony, the Piano Concerto, the *Gayaneh* ballet, the *Poem about Stalin*, the Violin Concerto and the *Masquerade* suite bear the unmistakable stamp of Khachaturyan's style, of his fresh and original artistic individuality. All these compositions are characterized by the quality of symphonism which is the nature of his work. Each piece marks his growing mastery in constructing large-scale musical forms, in the harmonious development of his material, often growing out of a single melodic "nucleus," in posing and convincingly solving complex social and ethical problems.

These features manifest themselves with particular clarity in his Second Symphony inspired by the grim events of the Second World War.

* * *

Khachaturyan spent the summer of 1943 at the Composers' Home near the town of Ivanovo, a major centre of the textile industry. Among the composers who stayed there with their families were Prokofiev, Shostakovich, Myaskovsky, Gliere, Kabalevsky, Shaporin, Peiko, and Muraldi. Some of them lived in what was known as the "White House," the former manor-house of the landlord; others lived in individual little cottages built on the territory of the former poultry state farm, which the

Soviet Government had handed over to the Union of Soviet Composers. The Ivanovo House proved a great help to many composers during the hard war years.

The Composers' House at Ivanovo accommodated visitors all the year round, but during the spring and summer months the influx of guests was particularly great. In order to create the best working conditions for as many composers as possible, the management put a piano into every cottage and in addition hired rooms for the season in the village of Afanasyevo near by, which it also provided with pianos. The composers who lived in the big house started out every morning for their working-rooms in the village. In three years, beginning with 1943, Afanasyevo witnessed the birth of such works as Prokofiev's Fifth and Sixth symphonies, Second Violin Sonata and Eighth Piano Sonata, Shostakovich's Eighth and Ninth symphonies, Myaskovsky's Twenty-Fifth Symphony and Cello Concerto, Kabalevsky's cycle of twenty-four preludes for piano and his Second Quartet, Shaporin's *Saga about the Battle for the Russian Land*, Gliere's Fourth Quartet and several symphonic compositions. Khachaturyan, too, worked with a will and composed his Second Symphony, Cello Concerto and Three Arias for voice and orchestra. Thus the small village gained prominence in the history of Soviet music as the place where many compositions of world fame first saw the light of day.

The tradition at the Ivanovo House was to work from 10 in the morning to 2 in the afternoon (when dinner was served) and after that, till about five. The evenings were usually spent in the "White House," or on the volley-ball ground where old and young played with equal enthusiasm. Volley-ball matches were not infrequently held at the Ivanovo House and each player was judged strictly according to his prowess, no matter who he might be off the court. "And so," Khachaturyan says in his reminiscences of Sergei Prokofiev, "15-year-old Lyonka, the boy from the next village, nicknamed 'the mine-thrower' because of his terrific 'smash hits' and his skill at recovering the ball from the most impossible positions, enjoyed far greater prestige than the slow, clumsy Shaporin or the short-sighted, awkward Prokofiev."

All the composers and musicologists had their families staying with them at the Ivanovo House. The children enlivened the atmosphere, and the grown-ups were often tempted to join them in their simple fun and games. Khachaturyan, who was there with his wife and his three-year-

old son, Karen, liked playing with the children. He was fond of taking little Karen and joining Shostakovich and his children, Galya and Maxim, on their berrying or mushrooming expeditions.

Sometimes everybody would gather in the "White House" to listen to a newly-written work, and exchange comments and impressions.

The time the composers spent together at the Ivanovo House was not merely productive but it also brought them closer together and facilitated a fruitful exchange of experience.

Once, on a warm summer's evening, Khachaturyan and his wife and the author of this book were invited to Shostakovich's working-room, and in that plain peasant cottage he played to us for the first time his Eighth Symphony.

The Symphony, throbbing with the spirit of the grim present and breathing the atmosphere of war, overwhelmed its first listeners. I remember well that after hearing the Symphony we came out into the small front garden, sat on the bench and could not bring ourselves to say anything. The composer was silent, we were silent—we were too much moved by the music we had heard.

Only after we had bidden Shostakovich good-night and were walking home did Khachaturyan find his voice to say: "We have been present at the birth of a great symphony."

Shostakovich's Eighth Symphony impressed Khachaturyan all the more strongly because he was then finishing his Second Symphony, another impassioned response of a Soviet patriot and artist to the tragic and heroic events of the war years.

The idea of the Symphony came to Khachaturyan at the very beginning of the war. Shaken to the depths of his soul with the horrors of the war, Khachaturyan set out to write an epic symphony. He wanted his music to express the thoughts and emotions of his countrymen, to depict the heroic struggle of the people fighting against a terrible and cruel enemy, to glorify the spiritual beauty and grandeur of the people defending their freedom.

"In composing my Symphony, I strove to express through my music the ideas and feelings of our people," he wrote.

The markings on the MS. score show that Scherzo, the second movement, was written in 6 days, the third movement, in 4 days and the finale was begun on August 28 and finished on September 10, 1943.

There is no doubt that in his searchings Khachaturyan could not escape the influence of that wonderful modern symphony, Shostakovich's Seventh, or *Leningrad*, composed in 1941. The common patriotic idea of the two works determined to a certain degree their common dramaturgic plan. And yet Khachaturyan managed to solve this problem in his own original way. In creating a vast symphonic canvas embracing a multitude of life's phenomena, the composer preserved throughout his own vivid personality, and passionately spoke his own language.

"Optimistic tragedy" would be an apt definition of the composer's conception, who tried to solve in this Symphony a very difficult task of giving a symphonic interpretation to the idea of patriotism.

The Second Symphony is a programme work with a subject dealing with the events of the Great Patriotic War. It would be wrong, however, to try to discover concrete images in the music depicting the tragic events of the war or any "battle" episodes. Permeated with the spirit of true humanism, the Symphony stirs one with its pent-up emotionality, the passion of its musical speech and the spiritual beauty of its images.

The emotional content, musical idiom and imagery of the Second Symphony follow the main line of Khachaturyan's creative work. It is a romantically-agitated tale about things the composer has lived through, combining turbulent passion and epic stateliness, deep meditation and elements of the *pathétique*. It abounds in colourful images, highly emotional and expressive of love of life. The new symphony differs from Khachaturyan's preceding works in a greater dramatism of its emotional content and greater tenseness, and a certain "explosiveness" of its idiom.

The Second Symphony was first performed by the State Symphony Orchestra of the U.S.S.R. under B. Khaikin in the Large Hall of the Moscow Conservatoire on December 30, 1943. After hearing it in orchestral performance Khachaturyan made some changes in the score, in particular changing the order of the slow movement and the Scherzo (in the new version the Scherzo comes immediately after the opening movement), reinforcing the brass choir in the finale and deleting some passages here and there. The second version of the Symphony had its *première* in Moscow under A. Gauk's baton on March 6, 1944. In 1946 Khachaturyan received for it a Stalin Prize (first degree).

This Symphony, presenting a new aspect of the composer's profound philosophical approach to symphonic music, marks a new and important stage in his artistic development.

Soviet music criticism knows Khachaturyan's Second Symphony under the title of *Bell Symphony*, which was given to it by G. Khubov, a Soviet musicologist, the author of the first scholarly analysis of this work.* He was right in defining it as a tragic poem of struggle, a stirring song about the spiritual greatness of heroism overcoming suffering and death. He emphasized the significance of the "bell theme" recurring throughout the work. He read into it a "multi-semantic philosophical meaning" revealed both "in the subject matter and in the Symphony's intensive thematic development."

The alarm bell sounded against a deafening tremolo of the orchestra creates an atmosphere of anxiety and tension from the first bars. This extremely simple descending motif at once speaks of the horrors of war and calls to fight; it plays a prominent part in the Symphony's musical dramaturgy. It recurs in the development section and in the closing section of the first movement, its echoes are heard in the sorrowful (slow) third movement, and the powerful tolling of the bell closes the finale.

Each recurrence of this eloquent theme has a new function in the development of the drama, expressing a new aspect of the work's varied emotional content.

A short but extremely dramatic introduction, bringing the listener into the thick of grim events, skilfully leads up to an agitated broad theme slightly Oriental in character. Deep sorrow, the emotions of a troubled but stout heart—this is what this expressive melody, first stated in the violas, speaks of. The songful theme is followed by a new episode built up on an original combination of two contrasting images, a characteristic dance tune and recitative-improvisation. This device, incidentally, is often encountered in Khachaturyan's music, which has been noted by D. Kabalevsky in one of his articles:

"The juxtaposition of the dance element and the element of free impassioned improvisation forms the basis of sonata form in Khachaturyan's music. These two elements, unified by their folk origin but differing in the way they manifest themselves, give birth to contrast and determine the dynamics of symphonic development."**

True enough, Khachaturyan makes excellent use of this device to

* G. Khubov, "The Bell Symphony," *Soviet Music Collection*, No. 5, 1946.

** D. Kabalevsky, "Yemelyan Pugachov and Gayaneh," *Soviet Music Collection*, No. 1, 1943.



Sergei Prokofiev and Aram Khachaturyan in 1946



Aram Khachaturyan with his pupils at the Moscow Conservatoire

draw a vivid picture of struggle, throbbing with inner tension and capturing the listener by its powerful dramatic drive. The tempestuous development section, filled with acute conflicts and reminding one of the tragic days of war, is interrupted by short episodes of calm—reminders of the carefree past. But the visions of peace are all too short-lived; we hear again the mournful tread of the main songful theme bringing us back to the thoughts of our suffering country, of the fierce battle with the forces of evil. The composer repeats the episodes reconstructing in our memory the main images of the first movement. Then, against a background of expiring orchestral parts, we hear the short but ominous motif of the alarm-bell.

The second movement is a precipitous, brilliantly orchestrated Scherzo. The composer wanted to introduce an element of relaxation into the high dramatic tension. Based on impetuous rhythms of a folk dance—a kind of lezghinka—the music, however, does not impress one as depicting a scene of carefree popular merry-making. For all its unbridled temperament, the music preserves the elements of anxiety and militant determination. The central episode of the Scherzo—tender, lyrical, in the style of Oriental improvisation—stresses the mood of anxiety; it flits by like an insubstantial poetic vision bringing to us memories of happy peaceful work, children at play, and nature.

The orchestration of the Scherzo is distinguished not only by its vivid and fresh colours but also by an unusual choice of timbres, clear-cut and dramatic.

The third movement is in the nature of a requiem in memory of the heroes who have laid down their lives for their country. Commenting on the content of this movement, Khachaturyan said that he wanted it to express the inconsolable grief of a mother over her dead soldier son. One of the main themes used here is a wonderful Armenian song *Varskan Akhper* which the composer heard his mother sing when he was a boy.

The sorrowful and dramatic monologue of the mother is interwoven with the musical texture of the entire piece, developing against the sustained unhurried pace of a funeral march, reaching immense dramatic tension in the climax. In order to bring into greater relief the feelings of gnawing pain and wrath overflowing the heart of the people, the composer introduced the sombre and awe-inspiring theme of a mediaeval chant, *Dies Irae* (*The Day of Wrath*). He presents a masterful

and highly complex contrapuntal combination of the mother's theme and the characteristic theme of the *Dies Irae*, faithfully preserving the unchanging background of the inexorable and grimly-majestic funeral procession.

A triumphant fanfare announces the sun-lit and brilliantly festive finale. A resonant chorus of the brasses sings a jubilant anthem to victory; this music of titans asserts the triumph of life over death, of light over darkness. Towards the end of the finale (after the powerful culmination) one suddenly hears the sad and agitated main theme of the first movement again. It is a reminder of what has been experienced. The loud clanging of the alarm-bell, closing the Symphony, is also a reminder and a warning. But the concise bell theme of the introduction has acquired a new meaning; while recalling the past, the bell at the same time adds its voice to the universal triumph of victory, strengthening the people's will to struggle, their faith in eventual victory.

The *Bell Symphony* is one of Khachaturyan's finest symphonic compositions, and a major achievement in Soviet music

In it the composer has succeeded in convincingly and forcefully embodying a significant philosophical idea, in making the Symphony a kind of musical record of those grim and heroic days. He has poured into this work his heart's blood, filled it with the passion of a patriot-artist. The music of the Symphony bears witness to the skill and imagination of its author, it is rich in happy finds in orchestration and original devices of thematic development. It should be noted, however, that the composer's unrestrained temperament is apt to run away with him and to suggest to him a too lavish use of potent expressive media, a piling up of overwhelming sonorities. This is especially true of the finale, whose orchestration is at times too ponderous.

Among the conductors who have performed Khachaturyan's Second Symphony mention should be made of Georges Georgescu, a Rumanian, whose talented interpretation has enriched our understanding of the Symphony. Incidentally, he has been able to determine the correct tonal balance in the finale, as a result of which it impresses one not with its thunderous sound but with the beauty and expressiveness of the music.

Khachaturyan once said in conversation with the author of the present book that it was hard for him to confine his "unbridled musical imagination" within the bounds of sonata form.

"I write what I hear," he said. "Sometimes my musical ideas overflow the canonized forms. Then I begin guessing whether it will fit in or not. And often I cannot make sure until I hear it played by an orchestra. Usually, however, my intuition leads me in the right direction."

Almost all of Khachaturyan's compositions are characterized by a striving for expressiveness and vivid picturesqueness.

"I cannot be neutral, I love tangible, almost sculptured images. There is too much tension in my music. I know it's a fault—one must not 'be always at one's listeners' throats' so to say, I understand...."

When, at a considerably later date, he took up conducting and came to know the orchestra intimately, Khachaturyan developed a critical attitude to his works. "Khachaturyan the conductor is not always satisfied with Khachaturyan the composer," he would say jokingly, meaning, among other things, his too heavy scoring.

* * *

Three Arias (*Poem*, *Legend* and *Dithyramb* to words by Armenian poets) composed in 1944 for high voice and orchestra are among Khachaturyan's best works.

Soviet music critics have often voiced their surprise that vocal compositions occupy such an insignificant place in Khachaturyan's work, lyrical and songful by nature. Although he loves the theatre and possesses a keen sense of the stage, Khachaturyan has never attempted to write an opera. Choral works, too, are not numerous in Khachaturyan's output, and there are almost no romances to speak of. This is all the more a pity because among the few vocal compositions that Khachaturyan has written there are excellent examples of the genre with beautiful and expressive melodies. These are the well-known songs from the films *Pepo* and *The Garden*, the winsome *Armenian Drinking Song*, the poetic *Song of the Heart*, the songs *My Motherland*, *The Carpet of Happiness*, and the wonderful children's song *What Children Dream of*; the two splendid *à cappella* choruses for the film *Admiral Ushakov* and the majestic Anthem of the Armenian S.S.R.

The Three Arias are a vocal-symphonic cycle unified by a single idea; it is a long and deeply lyrical poem of love, and each of the arias deals with the different aspects of this inexhaustible theme.

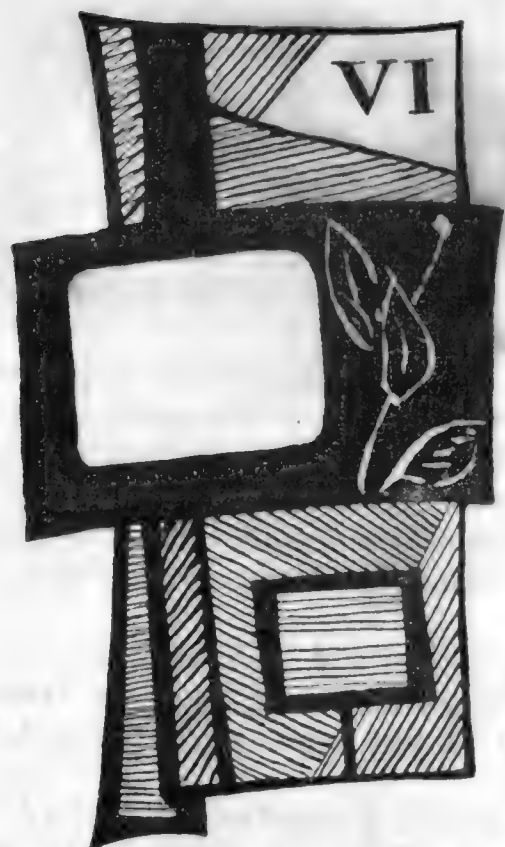
The *Poem*, the first of the arias, is written to Ovanes Tumanyan's poem *In the Folk Style* in the Russian translation by V. Bryusov. It is an

agitated and at the same time lyrical monologue with the vocal part developing freely, almost in the manner of instrumental music. The composer treats the vocal line not as the basis of the whole piece, but more as if it were a voice-part in a symphony orchestra. This is at once the aria's strong and weak point. Its strength is the symphonic nature of the whole, and its weakness—the insufficient care taken of the expressive aspect of the words sung, which sometimes suffers from the “instrumental” approach to the melody.

The second of the arias, the *Legend*, is free from this fault. It is an attempt to translate into music Ovanes Tumanyan's famous poem *Akh-Tamar* (the Russian translation by K. Balmont). The dramatic content of Tumanyan's poem about the struggle and death of the hero who gave up his life for the love of a beautiful girl has found an adequate expression in the highly emotional music of the aria.

The music of the *Dithyramb*, the third aria in the cycle to M. Peshik-tashlyan's *Don't Go Thither, My Songs* is passionately impetuous, which, however, is sometimes at variance with the sad, elegiac mood of the poem.

The orchestral parts in the arias are brilliant, they attract the listener with their true concert bravura, colourful orchestration, and a texture rich in polyphonic devices. Here Khachaturyan is seen once more as a consummate master of the orchestra.



C H A P T E R

DURING the war years the attitude towards the Soviet Union on the part of the people in America and Britain underwent a change, and their interest in the life and culture of the Soviet people greatly increased. The performance in the U.S.A. and Britain of Shostakovich's Seventh (*Leningrad*) and Eighth symphonies, Prokofiev's Fifth Symphony and Khachaturyan's Second Symphony and instrumental concertos aroused unprecedented enthusiasm of the American and British audiences. The patriotic songs of Soviet composers touched the hearts of all peoples of the world.

The newspapers paid homage to the country whose artists were capable in those hard days of creating works marked by undying beauty and high moral content.

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The summer of 1946 Khachaturyan again spent with his family at the Ivanovo House. Again his companions were Prokofiev, Myaskovsky, Shostakovich, Gliere and Kabalevsky. Again, after a day spent at the piano or a writing-table, the composers played volley-ball, went on exciting excursions or to gather mushrooms.

At that time Khachaturyan contemplated writing a new instrumental concerto for the cello, the first instrument he had learned to play as a professional at the Gnesin Music School. It was but natural that in composing the new work Khachaturyan drew upon his own experience as cellist in matters of technique. While setting out to write a third instrumental concerto the composer fully realized the difficulties he would encounter in composing a work in that form for the cello, an instrument little

adapted by its very nature to compete with the modern orchestra. The strong point and the chief attraction of the instrument lie in its expressive tone, best suited for cantilena melodies. This suggested to Khachaturyan his approach to it; in the Concerto he treats the cello as a melodious instrument *par excellence*, one capable of expressively and emotionally presenting, "singing," a melody. So he composed many broad and rounded melodious themes, light and lyrical in mood. As is usual in his work, the Cello Concerto is filled with the spirit of folk songs, but the Oriental element here is less pronounced than in his Piano and Violin concertos.

The first movement is preceded by a short but meaningful introduction, a splendid preparation for the main theme in the solo cello, throbbing with emotion and inner energy. This broad and melodious theme captures the listener's attention and accompanies him through the different stages of symphonic development. This central melodic image is well set off by the elegant secondary theme, somewhat improvisatory in nature and definitely Oriental.

The slow second movement is warmly lyrical and ineffably beautiful; poetical musings, daydreams, contemplation of serene southern landscapes—such are the associations evoked by this heart-warming songful music.

In the third movement the composer depicts a popular festivity, fiery and seething with life. One of the mighty climaxes is the central episode with a new broad theme, a triumphant song asserting the leading idea of the work—the glorification of happy life. As in the two earlier concertos, here, too, the expressive main theme of the first movement is heard in the concluding section of the finale. The orchestration is rich, colourful and full of imagination—as is usual with Khachaturyan.

The Cello Concerto was first performed in November 1946 with Prof. Svyatoslav Knushevitsky, a well-known Soviet cellist, to whom it is dedicated, as soloist. Although the Cello Concerto has not gained the popularity of the Piano and Violin concertos, it has nevertheless been incorporated in the repertoires of many cellists, both in the U.S.S.R. and abroad.

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The upsurge in the creative output of Soviet composers which began during the war, continued after its termination. The first post-war years

were marked by major achievements in the field of symphonic and chamber music, by the production of new operas and ballets and by the victories of Soviet executants at international contests. At the same time the period was also marked by certain undesirable tendencies born of the influence of Western abstract modernist art affecting some of the Soviet composers. This influence manifested itself mostly in the heightened interest on the part of certain artists in purely formalist searchings to the detriment of the ideological content of art.

In 1947, to mark the thirtieth anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution, Khachaturyan composed a one-movement *Symphony-Poem* for full orchestra, organ and additional 16 trumpets (first performed on December 13, 1947, under the baton of Y. Mravinsky). This work was criticized by the Soviet public for the prevalence of purely sound effects over an inner content. Khachaturyan took the criticism in good part, paying great heed to it and pondering over the causes of it, and this has undoubtedly proved beneficial to his ideological and artistic development.

Khachaturyan has been composing incidental music to films since his student days, and has always liked doing it. He says that the necessity to bring his music in conformity with the dramatic development of the film, with the shots, the reflection in music of concrete actions, events and images, act as a spur on his imagination, at the same time disciplining it and introducing order into his creative process.

"Composing for the cinema," Khachaturyan says, "is an important medium of communing with the broadest masses of listeners. This work sets ever new tasks before the composer and provides inexhaustible means for their imaginative solution."

Khachaturyan eagerly accepted the offer of film director M. Romm to write music for *Vladimir Ilyich Lenin*, a broadly conceived documentary. The composer worked on the score with enthusiasm; from the outset he decided to create a large-scale symphonic composition.

This is what Khachaturyan wrote about his work on it:

"I was deeply moved when I learnt that I was to compose music for the documentary shots of Lenin's death. I re-lived the feeling of desolation and irreparable loss I had experienced on those cold winter days in 1924 as I walked along the bonfire-lighted Moscow streets. Endless streams of people, crushed by sorrow just as I was, were moving to the Hall of Columns. Often, remembering the people locked in grief, I

thought I had to try and express these feelings in music. But I must confess, I did not dare.

"Having agreed to write the music for the film I had no choice but to make the attempt. The materials on the life of the great leader collected in it provided the impulse for my resolution.

"It is not for me to say how far I have been successful in solving the task set before me; at the preview all those present, including myself, were too moved to judge the music coolly . . . one had to hear it by itself. So I decided to hold it up to public criticism, and made it into the symphonic *Ode in Memory of Lenin* to be performed on the concert stage."

Shortly upon completing the score for *Vladimir Ilyich Lenin*, Khachaturyan began composing music for a long two-serial film *The Battle of Stalingrad* (directed by V. Petrov). The theme of the heroic city of Stalingrad is an inexhaustible one in art. The greatest battle in human history, the unbowed heroism of its immortal defenders, the world significance of their victory, the fates of the individual heroes, will provide material for literature and art for centuries to come.

The Battle of Stalingrad was conceived as a broad historical canvas depicting the heroic fight of Stalingrad's defenders. The content of the film with numerous battle episodes, tank attacks, aviation and artillery action determined the character of the music.

"I was called upon to write battle music mainly," the composer told us. "The first task like this in my life. Two hours of battle music!"

The chief difficulty lay in the fact that there were very few episodes calling for lyrical music which was necessary to contrast with the main theme.

In describing his work on the film Khachaturyan wrote:

"The contrast which enabled me to throw in relief the heroism of the Soviet people was afforded by the themes dealing with the fascist invasion. For instance, in the scene of the capture of Field Marshal Paulus, showing the endless columns of the would-be conquerors plodding dejectedly along, escorted by Soviet soldiers, I used the theme of the Hitlerites' onrush."

The music for the film *The Battle of Stalingrad* won Khachaturyan a Stalin Prize, first degree. It has been used for a long programme suite of the same title having as a leitmotif the broad melody of the old folk song sung on the Volga, *There's a Rock on the Volga*, employed as a symbol of the greatness and indomitable will to victory of the defenders of



Rehearsal of a concert programme in Montevideo, 1957



Aram Khachaturyan with his son Karen, a pupil of the Music School of the Moscow Conservatoire, listens to a record of his music made during his tour in Latin America

Aram Khachaturyan in a moment of recreation at the Composers' Club





Aram Khachaturyan conducts the performance
of his works in the Large Hall of the Moscow
Conservatoire

Stalingrad. Recurring throughout the suite, this theme closes it in a majestic apotheosis.

Although the composer presents here a series of vivid and impressive musical pictures, the suite as a whole lacks real symphonic development; for all the masterful use of the various expressive means of the orchestra made in it, it tires the listener with its abundance of tense episodes, not offset by any contrasting themes and moods.

Beginning with 1944 Khachaturyan composed music for several of M. Romm's films. These are *Prisoner No. 217* (1944), *The Russian Question* (1947), *The Secret Mission* (1950), *Admiral Ushakov* (1953) and *Ships Storming the Bastions* (1953). The two last-named films are an historical epic about the great Russian Admiral, Fyodor Ushakov (1744-1817). Khachaturyan has composed many a page of colourful symphonic music for these films. There are naval battle scenes, pictures from the life of sailors, musical portraits of Ushakov and his contemporaries—heroic sailors, courtiers, etc.

Khachaturyan built his musical epic around the themes associated with the main character of the film—Admiral Ushakov—and the image of the people, the makers of history. In the overture, side by side with "the Ushakov theme," presented by the horns, he used the melody of a dashing sea ditty, *Disperse, Ye Enemies!* This theme recurs in the episodes depicting the heroic deeds of Russian sailors. It is heard in the orchestra at the moment of the solemn launching of the Russian fleet, and its elements are present in the requiem to the seamen who fell in battle.

The composer says that he was particularly conscious of his responsibility as he worked on the requiem. "The shots which the director has succeeded in making extremely expressive, present the emotion of sorrow in different aspects through the characters' reaction to death. It set me thinking deeply. Of course there was a difference in the way the fallen sailors were lamented by the Greek peasants whom they had set free, by their mates, or by the Admiral himself who set the tone in battle as well as over the open graves. I wanted to express in the music of the requiem all this and my own attitude—the attitude of a Soviet artist—and in such a way, besides, that this picture of human grief would be free from the terrors of death. The Russian people are free from it, and that is why I considered a quotation from a dashing sea song appropriate here, although, of course, its theme was transformed."

Khachaturyan produced some excellent music for the films *Saltanat* (1955) and *Othello* (1956). The grandeur of the thoughts and feelings of Shakespeare's tragedy, the seething passions, and the torrid Mediterranean atmosphere have been vividly captured in the film by talented director S. Yutkevich; Khachaturyan's music convincingly conveys the spirit of the tragedy and reveals the inner world of the characters. He has composed a broad symphonic picture consisting of long orchestral episodes, exquisite genre scenes, dramatic scenes and songs. The best items are the Overture, the expressive Prologue—Othello's tale—the charming and peaceful scene in the vineyard and the dramatic monologue expressing Othello's despair. Desdemona's poetic Vocalise and *Song about the Willow*, as well as the characteristic *Song of a Soldier*, are also very good.

His absorption in music for films, which undoubtedly has been a useful experience, took Khachaturyan away for a time from other musical genres. His plans for symphony and chamber music remained in abeyance for several years, and he did very little in the field of ballet.

In 1950 Khachaturyan took up teaching composition at the Gnesin Musical-Pedagogical Institute,* and almost at the same time he took up a professorship at the Moscow Conservatoire. This was his first attempt at teaching, all his experience in this sphere was confined to assisting at the lessons given by N. Myaskovsky at the time of his post-graduate-ship.

"It is not the process of teaching I like so much as the results it brings," Khachaturyan says. "I like thinking that my advice can help a young composer to discover himself, to reveal his musical individuality and to overcome the difficulties in his way."

Teaching takes up a lot of one's time, but Khachaturyan does not grudge it. In directing the musical development of such talented young composers as A. Eshpai, E. Oganessian, A. Vieru, L. Loputin, B. Trotsyuk and R. Boiko, Khachaturyan not only gives them the benefit of his experience but himself benefits from the contact with young people. His lessons often turn into animated discussions of vital problems of composition, in the course of which interesting ideas are expressed, thoughts

* The Institute grew out from the Gnesin Music School where Khachaturyan began his musical education.

shared and new and happy solutions arrived at. "What I prize most in my pupils," Khachaturyan says, "is initiative. I am prepared to overlook a fault in technique but not the lack of ideas."

In accordance with the principles of his own teacher, N. Myaskovsky, Khachaturyan never binds his pupils by ready-made precepts but carefully and tactfully directs their minds. He never tires of exhorting young composers to exercise judgement in the solution of artistic problems. This is what he wrote in the article which appeared in *Sovetskaya Muzyka*, No. 11, 1953:

"I am firmly convinced that works devoid of a living and searching thought, outwardly 'correct' and shipshape and streamlined to a point where they all become exactly alike, cannot contain the seeds of artistic progress. Socialist realism in art does not allow of such similitude in creative work, it presupposes a freedom in the development of most varied and definitely expressed artistic individualities."

Khachaturyan holds that a composer who puts all of himself into the process of teaching young composers inevitably loses something of his individuality, because no matter whether he wishes it or not, he gives away to his pupils his most cherished ideas. That is why when concentrating on a new composition Khachaturyan tries to cut to the minimum the number of lessons he gives.

"It is quite different with the performance of music," he says. "It excites the creative urge in one, and is a stimulus to composing."

Perhaps that is why Khachaturyan, at a mature age, has devoted himself with such enthusiasm to the study of conducting.

When the future composer first began to play in the modest school band in Tbilisi he already had visions of becoming a conductor. This vision haunted him in later years; he ardently desired to establish contact with an orchestra, to be able to lead it after him, to make it play his music so that it would sound as the composer heard it with his inner ear. He made several attempts to master conducting, but his work and public duties left him little time for systematic study. Chance helped him. In February 1950, the sponsors of a meeting between the electors and their candidate S. Vavilov, President of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences, asked Khachaturyan to conduct several items from his *Gayaneh* suite and the finale from his Violin Concerto on the occasion. The soloist was to be Leonid Kogan. The orchestra had rehearsed under the direction of an experienced conductor and knew the pieces well.

"I could not decide at once," Khachaturyan recalled later. "But I liked the idea very much, and so on that eventful evening I 'beat the time' for the whole programme at the Scientists' Club, and all went well. To my astonishment the concert was a success. Academician Vavilov thanked me warmly for the pleasure I had given him and made me promise I should appear as a conductor in the future. On that day I was fatally bitten by the 'conducting bug.' I even dreamed in my sleep that I was on the podium conducting an orchestra."

In the summer of 1950 Khachaturyan conducted a number of programmes of the Moscow Regional Philharmony Orchestra in Moscow's parks. Each appearance brought him more experience and confidence in his powers. In August 1951 he conducted a large programme consisting of *The Battle of Stalingrad*, Violin Concerto with L. Kogan as soloist, and the *Masquerade Suite* performed in the Hermitage Gardens in Moscow. The concert was a tremendous success and the Waltz from the Suite was encored.

Khachaturyan likes to recall the concert trip he made to Armenia and Georgia in the autumn of 1951. He conducted the orchestras of the Armenian and Georgian philharmonies playing the *Ode in Memory of Lenin*, the *Masquerade Suite*, the Violin and Piano concertos and dances from *Gayaneh*; the soloists were David Oistrakh and pianist Arnold Kaplan.

The concerts at which Khachaturyan conducts his own works are invariably successes. He masters the difficult art of conducting in direct contact with different orchestras and exacting but always friendly audiences. The composer has come to feel a need in conducting programmes of his compositions. Besides giving him the joy of hearing his ideas realized, his public appearances bring him in contact with his audiences and enable him to test his new works in orchestral performance. We have already quoted the composer's words that "Khachaturyan the conductor is not always satisfied with Khachaturyan the composer." And indeed, while rehearsing this or that work with an orchestra, Khachaturyan introduces changes in the scoring, and corrects the imperfections he discovers in the parts of the individual instruments.



C H A P T E R

IN DECEMBER 1950 Khachaturyan was able to realize a long-cherished dream—he visited Italy, and the trip proved an unforgettable experience. On his return home he wrote a long article to *Sovetskaya Muzyka* in which he shared his impressions with the readers.

At a concert of symphonic music in Rome he heard the Piano Concerto by Mario Peragallo, one of his first experiences of atonal dodecaphonous music. To Khachaturyan, whose work stems organically from folk music, this abstract “mathematical” music, divorced from national idiom, was utterly alien. This is what he wrote about

the Concerto in the article we have just mentioned:

“Peragallo’s Concerto is constructed in accordance with all the canons of the atonal art. It is a technically well-cut structure, abounding in cacophonous sonorities and innocent of any ideas or emotions whatsoever. The composer’s ‘know-how’ is in evidence everywhere, and he handles his orchestra with skill. And yet you would not find in the whole Concerto a dozen bars filled with living human music.”

In Italy Khachaturyan had many occasions to participate in heated discussions of the burning problems of modern music. In Rome he met Luigi Dallapiccola, an adherent of Schoenberg’s system of dodecaphony and one of the most prominent modernist composers. In the course of the violent debate that flared up during their meeting, Dallapiccola tried in vain to make a convert of Khachaturyan, while the Soviet composer tried to prove to “that apostle of Schoenberg on the Italian soil,” as Khachaturyan jokingly calls Dallapiccola, the vapidness of the formalist method of composition. As was to be expected, the opponents did not come to an agreement and did not arrive at a common view

on modern music, but that did not prevent them from parting good friends.

Khachaturyan met other outstanding Italian composers, among them Francesco Malipiero and Goffredo Petrassi. While talking to Petrassi Khachaturyan asked him to play something of his own. "There are too many people here," Petrassi said. "I'll play to you some other time." Khachaturyan told him that "we Soviet composers like our works to be heard by as many people as possible, and we are not afraid of free discussion and public appraisal." After that Petrassi played some of his pieces. His music showed great talent, mastery of form and proved to have a quite acceptable idiom.

Khachaturyan gives an interesting account of his visit to the Santa Cecilia Academy of Music in Rome, one of the oldest Italian institutions, founded in 1566.

"I was met on the broad stone staircase by one of the Academy's directors. After an interchange of civilities he led me to a big room where some important-looking and formal gentlemen—the professors of the Academy—received me. A lengthy ceremony of introductions followed and then the usual compliments were exchanged again. This ritual over, we had a short conversation. I was given some data on the history of the Academy, told something about its current affairs, asked a few questions about the Moscow Conservatoire, and then older students entertained us with a short concert. Almost all of them played very well and showed a good understanding of the music. I heard my Trio for violin, clarinet and piano played with a correct sense of style and technical perfection. After that the formal atmosphere somewhat relaxed; with a friendly reserve the professors half-turned towards me and honoured me with applause."

Khachaturyan was eager to go to Italy because he wanted to see the historical monuments associated with the uprising of gladiators led by the people's hero, Spartacus. He made several excursions to the Colosseum, the great structure two thousand years old, whose stones are the silent witnesses of glorious pageants and the bloody games of gladiators. The composer admits that the sight of the majestic ruins has greatly helped him in solving the complex artistic problems he encountered in his new work—the ballet *Spartacus*. While improvising at the piano in his Moscow flat in search of the musical characterizations for his future

ballet, Khachaturyan often saw before him the Colosseum, the roads leading to Rome and the beautiful Mediterranean scenery.

In Rome Khachaturyan made his first appearance abroad as conductor. He says that the Italian musicians accorded their Soviet colleague a very friendly welcome. The Rome Radio Orchestra which he conducted carefully studied his new work, *The Battle of Stalingrad*, and played it with great animation.

In the spring of 1951 Khachaturyan again went abroad, this time to the North, to Iceland. There, too, he saw much that was interesting, established friendly contacts with artists and received new impressions which expanded his knowledge of Western music. The original music of Iceland, its rich musical folklore, aroused his lively interest; Khachaturyan liked the austere and yet poetic songs about northern nature and the life of courageous seamen and fishermen.

In Reikjavik, Khachaturyan conducted the local orchestra in a programme consisting of the *Ode in Memory of Lenin*, *The Battle of Stalingrad* and *Masquerade* suites, and dances from *Gayaneh*.

His next trip was to Bulgaria to represent the Union of Soviet Composers (together with A. Filippenko, a Ukrainian composer) at the review of the work of Bulgarian composers held in Sofia in June, 1952. Guests were invited from other People's Democracies, too, and the works at the review were performed by the best Bulgarian orchestras, choruses and soloists.

In the Soviet press Khachaturyan wrote with sincere admiration about the art of choral singing in Bulgaria and about its rich folk music. What appealed to him most were the original and very complex rhythms of Bulgarian folk songs. Among the works heard at the review, Khachaturyan noted those by the talented composers S. Obretenov, A. Raichev, F. Kutev, M. Goleminov, L. Pipkov, P. Stainov, V. Stoyanov and by some young authors. Khachaturyan met and made friends with the outstanding Bulgarian composer Pancho Vladigerov whose work he has always greatly admired.

* * *

Years passed, and the "promising young composer" Khachaturyan became a mature and world-famous master of Soviet music. With each new work grew the popularity and fame of the composer, whose works vividly and optimistically portrayed Soviet life.

Time has silvered Khachaturyan's raven-black hair, but it has been unable to curb his impetuosity or diminish his ardent love for truth and beauty in art.

In June of 1953 the Soviet music-lovers marked Khachaturyan's fiftieth birthday. Concerts featuring his works were given in many cities and broadcast over the air; the composer received congratulations from various public bodies and art workers, Soviet and foreign.

In his article on Khachaturyan's fiftieth birthday D. Shostakovich wrote:

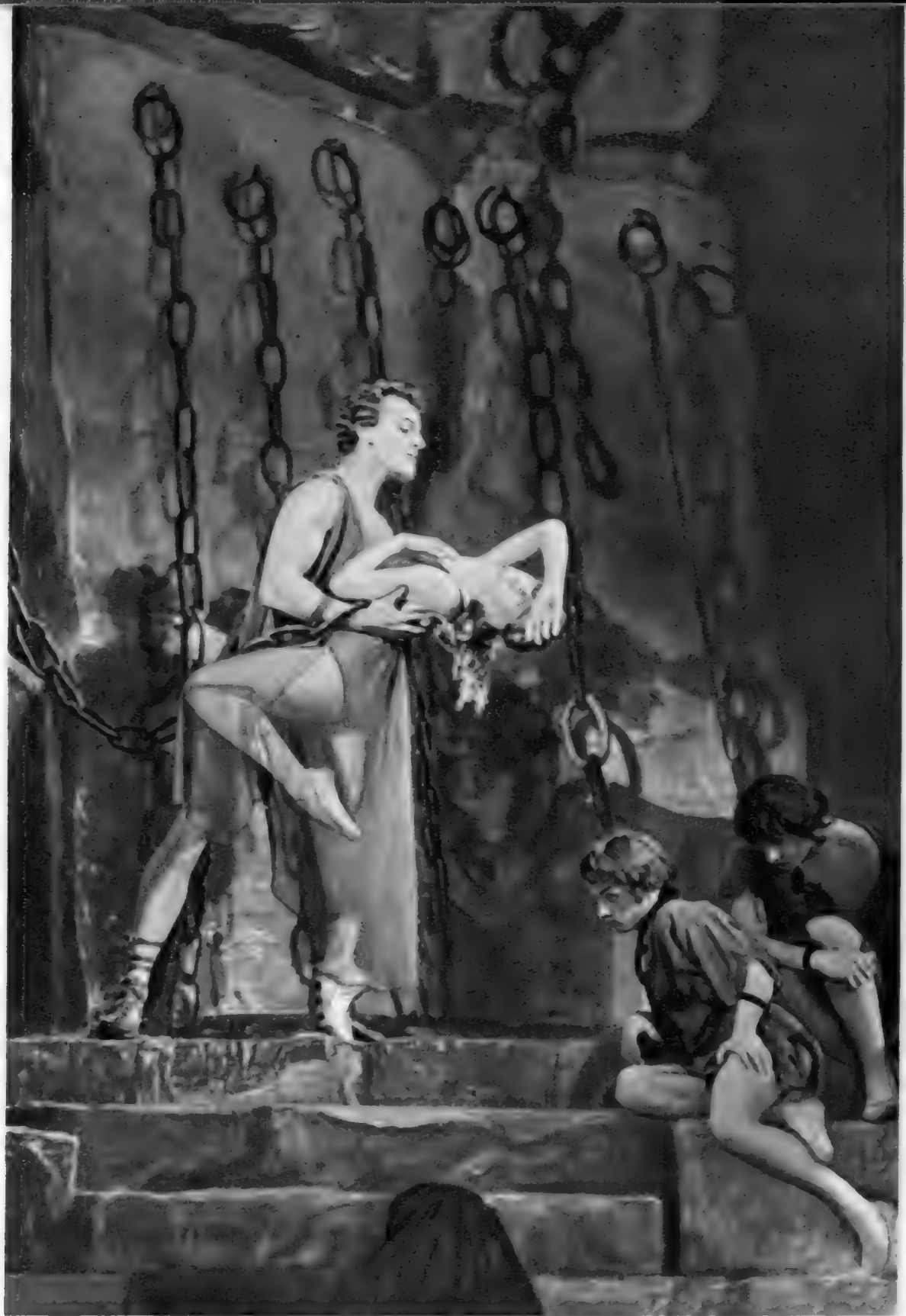
"Khachaturyan's services to the music of the Armenian people are immense. No less are the services he has rendered the musical culture of the Soviet Union as a whole. He is the first among our composers to have convincingly brought to light the most varied methods of symphonizing the music of the Soviet East to express strong dramatic emotions, patriotic ideas and profound feelings. Aram Khachaturyan is fifty. But he is a young composer. He is young in the best meaning of the term. His creative ardour, his great and original talent are far from being on the wane. I am firmly convinced that Khachaturyan has not yet reached his upper limit, that the joys of many creative victories are in store for him. The earnest of this is his inexhaustible optimism, bright outlook characteristic of a Soviet patriot-artist, rich store of expressive media and, finally, mature and assured craftsmanship."*

A delegation from one of the biggest of Moscow's chemical works was present at the celebrations. The composer's friendship with the works' young vocalists and instrumentalists dates back to 1949. He attends their amateur musical classes regularly, helps with advice and supervises rehearsals.

Among the various functions held in honour of Khachaturyan's fiftieth birthday, the one at the Kauchuk Workers' Club in Moscow was especially noteworthy. Khachaturyan conducted a big programme of his music, after which speeches were made. Young members of amateur art circles and old workers spoke of the fast friendship existing between them and the composer, and expressed their love and respect for him.

In 1952 Khachaturyan composed his *Solemn Poem* for symphony orchestra, a work imbued with the spirit of festivity, colourfully orchestrated and rich in plastic melodies. In writing it the composer did not set

* *Sovetskoye Iskusstvo (Soviet Art)*, June 10, 1953.



The Bolshoi Theatre première of Khachaturyan's ballet **Spartacus**. The **Slave Market** scene with D. Begak as Spartacus and N. Ryzhenko as Phrygia



Insurgent slaves elect Spartacus their leader (Act II)

himself any complex aims beyond composing a bright and joyful concert piece.

After that he composed incidental music to plays (*Macbeth*, at the Maly Theatre, and *Lermontov*, at the Art Theatre), wrote music for films, and at the same time contributed articles to the Soviet press on the vital problems of contemporary music.

One of the problems Khachaturyan has repeatedly touched upon is that of content and form in art. He advocates the principles of socialist realism in art, true innovation in creative work. He devoted a number of his articles and speeches to unmasking the pseudo-innovatory vagaries of certain modern composers of the West who were interested merely in formal novelty, and who regarded the history of the development of music as nothing else but a continuous "change of fashion."

"Innovation of this kind is alien to us," Khachaturyan wrote, "and we will tirelessly combat formalistic 'tone construction.'"

The innovatory creative work of realist artists is, in Khachaturyan's opinion, not merely a technological process, a search for original combinations of sounds; he holds that technique and form should be subordinate to the idea of a work, to its emotional content.

Khachaturyan has written several articles disputing the assertion of certain critics that modern music is non-national. "The idea of 'national' in art is a many-sided one," he said. "Along with melodic characteristics it comprises the musical thinking, the rhythms of dances, the tone quality of musical instruments and the way of expressing emotions characteristic of a given nation."

These ideas are borne out by the whole of Khachaturyan's work, with its deep penetration into the essence of the national art based on his profound understanding of the folk roots of music. Khachaturyan is unmistakably national in his symphonies, concertos and ballets. But the national character of his music is not confined to certain melodic elements or rhythms alone. His music is national in the truest and fullest sense of the word, at the same time enriched with the achievements of world music, and itself constituting a valuable contribution to world music.

In the summer of 1954 the Presidium of the U.S.S.R. Supreme Soviet conferred on Khachaturyan the title of People's Artist of the U.S.S.R., thereby expressing the esteem of the Soviet Government and of the people for the work of this talented composer and outstanding Soviet artist.

Khachaturyan likes to recall his journey to Finland in the spring of 1955. The Finnish public demonstrated a lively interest in the arrival of the Soviet composer. His concerts drew capacity audiences, there was an atmosphere of friendship and cordiality. The Finnish music press praised the programmes of the concerts highly, particularly the Piano Concerto brilliantly rendered by Tapani Valsta, a young Finnish pianist.

Khachaturyan's visits to Jean Sibelius, the great Finnish composer who was ninety years old at the time, left an unforgettable impression with him. The warm welcome Sibelius accorded his Soviet confrère deeply touched Khachaturyan.

"... He put his hands on my shoulders and looked into my eyes for a long time as if trying to read in them an answer to his unspoken question. A warm friendly handshake, and we at once plunged into an easy and frank conversation. Its theme was mainly music, of course, and musicians."*

Khachaturyan was astonished at the great Finnish composer's knowledge of Soviet music. Sibelius closely followed the musical life of the Soviet Union, and his wireless set kept him abreast of the latest works of Soviet composers. In his friendly chat with Khachaturyan, Sibelius recalled his young years when he had been a frequent guest in St. Petersburg and had known Rimsky-Korsakov, Glazunov, Lyadov and Rachmaninov.

Khachaturyan goes on to say in that same article:

"We touched upon modern Western music and the tasks facing composers today.

" 'Some compose music with their heads, others with their feet, but there are still others who compose it with their hearts,' Sibelius said with feeling."

Upon his return from Finland, Khachaturyan and his family spent several weeks in the Crimea, bathing, basking in the sun and enjoying long walks. Incidentally, Nina Vladimirovna Makarova, Khachaturyan's wife, is a well-known composer in her own right. As we have mentioned earlier, they became acquainted as students of N. Myaskovsky's class of composition. Nina Makarova graduated from the Moscow Conservatoire in 1936; she is the author of two operas, a symphony, a violin so-

* A. Khachaturyan, "My Meetings with Finnish Friends," *Sovetskaya Muzyka*, No. 8, 1955.

nata, numerous vocal compositions and several incidental scores for plays staged at Moscow theatres.

In the summer of 1955 Khachaturyan contributed to *Sovetskaya Muzyka* a long article entitled "Vital Problems" in which he expressed his cherished ideas about the ways of the development of Soviet music, the role and position of the artist in society, the necessity of strengthening friendly ties with progressive musicians in all countries. He advocated the promotion of creative emulation between composers with different personalities and a greater variety of stylistic searchings on the part of Soviet composers.

This is what he said on the subject of form and content in music:

"Sometimes a composer undergoes untold sufferings in his search for the 'musical words' in which he wishes to tell the people about his thoughts and feelings. True, it happens sometimes that these searchings bring no good: the idea does not find a worthy realization, the form becomes too complex, and the composer's justifiable wish to find *his own* means of expression leads to nothing. In short, the composer fails. And then certain 'overzealous' critics hasten to denounce the work that did not come off as formalistic, ideologically harmful, etc. I categorically object to this. More, I should be prepared rather to excuse the composer's failure than praise an insipid mediocrity trying to make its way under cover of well-sounding titles and ready-made worn-out formulas."

These words are extremely characteristic of Khachaturyan, a searching artist, sworn enemy of rubber-stamp devices, of easy well-trodden paths in art. He considers progressive art to be a potent factor in the life of society, a true-to-life and vivid expression of reality through varied artistic media. He justly considers the innovator artists, such as Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin, Chaikovsky, Smetana, Mussorgsky and Grieg, to be the greatest proponents of the realist viewpoint in art. The music of these great masters has preserved for us the flavour of their times and their nations in all the wealth and unique beauty of national form.

In the above-mentioned article Khachaturyan also deals with the problem of training young composers. He believes that the thesis of letting each creative personality develop in its own way should be followed with particular strictness as applied to young composers.

"Recalling the time when the composers of my generation were young," Khachaturyan writes, "I cannot help feeling deeply thankful to

Myaskovsky, Prokofiev, Gnesin and Shostakovich, whose influence we have always been aware of, to whose voice we have listened with particular attention, who taught us, not only to compose music, but also to be artists. I have used these two terms advisedly: to compose music and to be an artist is not always one and the same thing. A composer who is a real artist must possess spiritual riches, a broad horizon. The universe is immense. The life around us is infinitely rich, infinitely varied. Each new day brings us something new. I would like to call upon our young composers to strive incessantly for the new, to pay heed to the voice of the people, to study life, to derive inspiration from the nations' fight for peace, truth and happiness."

Speaking on the problem of creative output in the West today, Khachaturyan reminds his readers that the vital problems concerning the development of contemporary art, occupying the minds of Soviet artists, are equally important for many progressive artists in Europe and America, who are conscious of the crisis in the so-called "advance-guard" music. These musicians also ponder over the problems of realism and the folk nature of art and try to find the road to their listeners' hearts.

"Of course, the decadent, formalist trends are as yet very strong in the musical art of bourgeois countries. But it would be quite wrong to represent all Western music of today as such. Doubtless, there is much that makes us disagree with our Western colleagues. We have good reason to be indignant and outraged at the crude formalistic perversion characteristic of modern bourgeois music, and we reject uncompromisingly the anti-popular, cosmopolitan principles of modernism. But in our heated disputes with progressive musicians in the West we should strive for complete understanding. I am convinced that, given close contact, we could reach an agreement over moot problems, laugh together at what is open to ridicule and rejoice at what is good, progressive, what serves real and great culture, promotes the cause of peace and friendship among the nations."

Inspired by this noble idea of establishing friendship and ties with progressive musicians in Great Britain, Khachaturyan left for London in the autumn of 1955 where he was scheduled to appear in several programmes of his works with London orchestras. The concerts in London and Manchester were highly successful and attracted a great deal of attention. Khachaturyan arrived with David Oistrakh who played his

Violin Concerto; his Piano Concerto was performed by Moura Lympany, the British pianist who had had it in her repertoire for many years.

In Britain Khachaturyan met many outstanding musicians, heard the works of the younger generation of British composers, discussed the development of modern art, and delivered lectures on Soviet music. He made friends with Sir Arthur Bliss, William Walton, Alan Bush, Malcolm Arnold, and some other eminent musicians.

In his article "Meetings in England"* Khachaturyan wrote: "Despite certain aesthetic and other differences of opinion of British intellectuals and our own, we have many things in common. What brings us close is our common creative work, our desire to know each other, our respect for the spiritual values of nations, our striving to preserve and consolidate peace. In making the acquaintance of the British composers and their work I came to the conclusion that there is much we must discuss together, elaborating in our disputes formulas and theses understandable to all, of which we stand in such need and which will serve to reconcile what but yesterday seemed irreconcilable."

* *Sovetskaya Kultura* (*Soviet Culture*), Dec. 8, 1955.



C H A P T E R

KHACHATURYAN had long cherished the idea to compose a ballet dealing with the heroic image of Spartacus. We know that during his stay in Italy he studied this theme and drew mental pictures of his future ballet.

Composing music for the ballet took him about three and a half years. Actually his work on the score (as Khachaturyan himself wrote in the notes published for the ballet's *première* at the Kirov Opera and Ballet Theatre in Leningrad) lasted eight and a half months, because he could only work during the summer months. The libretto of *Spartacus* was written by the playwright N. Volkov, who made use of the works by the ancient historians

Plutarch and Appian. His efforts were successful: the scenario was spectacular, filled with exciting and highly dramatic episodes.

This scenario was adopted as the framework; working on it together the composer and librettist tried to make the ballet a vehicle for the lofty humanist idea of the people's struggle against oppression.

This is what Khachaturyan wrote in one of his articles: "Some critics have reproached me for choosing a subject taken from such remote antiquity. However, I think they are wrong. The era of Spartacus was an important one in the history of mankind, and now that many oppressed nations of the world are intensifying their struggle for national liberation and independence the immortal image of Spartacus has acquired particular significance. When I composed the music of my ballet and strove to comprehend the atmosphere of ancient Rome and bring to life the pictures of the remote past, I never ceased to feel the spiritual closeness of Spartacus to our own times."

The composer, whose aim was to convey through musical and chore-

ographic means the epic struggle of slave gladiators, was faced with the difficult task of capturing the atmosphere of the times, of finding music of appropriate character and style. History has not preserved authentic records of the music of ancient Rome, and we have no musical documents of those far-off days. Khachaturyan devoted a great deal of thought to this. His keen sense of the national element in music prevented him from composing in some non-national, abstract idiom. He approached his task from another angle.

The antique world had synthesized the culture and art of many different nations. And the task of the artist depicting that era lay not in reconstructing the elements of antique art—a task practically unrealizable—but in penetrating into the inner world of the people of that time, in comprehending the motivating forces of the struggle the slaves of Rome waged for their liberation. The composer should speak of it in the present-day idiom, an idiom understandable to present-day audiences, one capable of exciting their emotions and revealing to them the nobility of the champions of freedom.

"That is why," Khachaturyan says, "I tried to write the way I felt, remaining true to my individual style, my idiom, describing the events the way I understood and felt them."

N. Volkov's libretto appealed to the composer by its situations of extreme emotional tensivity, spectacular scenes of games and gladiators' combats on the arena of the Colosseum, splendid feasts and bacchanalias. The nine scenes into which the libretto falls have enabled him to give free rein to his imagination, to show fully his sense of the dance element and indulge his love for expressive plastic constructions. The dramatic content of the ballet has enabled Khachaturyan to elaborate symphonically the musical characterizations of the *dramatis personae*, to employ the leitmotif principle, to develop musical "through-going action" welding the plot of the whole, cementing as it were the immense score of the ballet.

Long before the ballet had its *première* at the Kirov Opera and Ballet Theatre on December 27, 1956, Soviet audiences heard the *Spartacus* symphonic suite. It comprises extensive symphonic fragments from the ballet as well as separate dances. The temperamental, emotional and colourful music bearing the stamp of Khachaturyan's original talent soon became popular with Soviet concert-goers.

D. Shostakovich wrote this about the ballet:

"Khachaturyan's individuality—the result of his great creative gift—reveals itself not only in his idiom, not only in leaving its imprint on almost every bar; this individuality is broader and implies something more than the sphere of musical technology alone—it comprises also the composer's outlook based on an intrinsically optimistic, life-asserting interpretation of our reality. I think that a remarkable feature of Khachaturyan's work as a whole and of the *Spartacus* ballet in particular is its folk nature. The national and folk nature of his music is manifest not only in his wonderful symphonies and instrumental concertos but also in all of his other compositions, however different their subjects may be."*

The piano score of *Spartacus* arranged for four hands by A. Gottlieb contains 4 acts and 9 scenes: *The Triumph of Rome, Slave Market, Circus, The Barracks of Gladiators, The Appian Way, The Feast at Crassus', Spartacus' Tent, Crassus' Tent, The Death of Spartacus*. While working on the production of the ballet at the Kirov Opera and Ballet Theatre, the composer and the librettist made some changes on the suggestion of L. Yakobson, the choreographer: Act II begins not with the uprising of the gladiators but with *Saturnalia*, the feast of Saturn, for which the composer had to write many pages of new music, including long pantomimes depicting the meeting between Spartacus and Phrygia and the brilliant scene of Aegina seducing young Harmodius, a comrade-at-arms of Spartacus, who later became a traitor, as well as fiery and temperamental bacchanalian dances.

Scene 5, *The Appian Way*, was not included in Yakobson's production, although it contains several charming pastoral dance episodes which serve to lessen the dramatic tensivity. This is certainly a pity, because this scene plays an important part in the development of the plot, showing the fraternizing of gladiators and Roman slaves.

We have already observed that the music of the ballet, rich in emotions and varied in expressive means, centres around a single dramatic idea and is built up on a well-thought-out and skilfully realized system of leitmotifs. First among them is the musical characterization of Spartacus; then there is the theme of Rome, the tragic theme of doomed gladiators, the vivid portraits of the proud and indomitable Phrygia, Spartacus' wife, of the wily and seductive Aegina and of the weak Harmodius. As the choreographic tragedy develops, each of these themes is

* *Sovetskaya Kultura*, August 20, 1955.



Aram Khachaturyan (third from left), Dmitry Kabalevsky (fifth from left), Rosa Fain (centre) and Victor Pikaizen (second from right) with a group of miners at Prokopyevsk in 1958



Aram Khachaturyan and Efrem Zimbalist (U.S.A.) were members of the Jury at the International Chaikovsky Piano and Violin Contest held in Moscow in 1958

changed, appearing in a new guise and acquiring new characteristics. The composer masterfully juxtaposes contrasting episodes and builds up to overwhelming climaxes.

In *Spartacus* Khachaturyan is lavish with vivid and expressive melodies, lush orchestral colours and exotic harmonies. The varied dance items, such as the *Dance of Egyptian Dancing Girl*, *Dance of Shepherd and Shepherdess*, *Aegina's Dance*, *Dance with Crotalums* and of course the bewitching *Dance of Gaditanae*, an example of Khachaturyan's mastery of symphonic development, are among the happiest pages of the score. The dramatic *Spartacus' Dance*—the appeal to take up arms—is very impressive. The scenes of the gladiators' games are highly imaginative.

The Soviet public acclaimed with enthusiasm the Kirov Theatre production of *Spartacus* in which the theatre's best ballerinas and male dancers were employed. The cast consisted of A. Makarov—Spartacus, N. Petrova and I. Zubkovskaya—Phrygia, A. Shelest—Aegina, S. Kuznetsov—Harmodius; the *décor* was by V. Khodasevich, the conductor—P. Feldt. This talented production by L. Yakobson instantly became one of the favourite in the repertoires of Leningrad theatres.

In November 1957 *Spartacus* with the libretto drastically altered by Yuri Blažek was produced at the National Theatre in Prague. The number of scenes was reduced to six and the order of their sequence was changed, which could not fail to interfere with the dramatic and musical logic of the ballet. Nevertheless the ballet company worked on it with enthusiasm, and *Spartacus* in its Prague version, too, was a major achievement of modern ballet.

The composer who was present at the *première* in Prague (November 3, 1957) was cheered both by the artists and the audience. Khachaturyan availed himself of the opportunity afforded by his visit to Prague to renew his contacts with his friends, the Czech composers, and hold many an exciting discussion with them on questions of art.

Khachaturyan spent the end of 1957 and the beginning of 1958 absorbed in work on the new version of *Spartacus*, which he was preparing for production at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow. The producer was Igor Moiseyev, a well-known Soviet choreographer, head of the State Folk Dance Ensemble of the U.S.S.R. Moiseyev was one of those who had encouraged Khachaturyan to compose the ballet and who had for a number of years been nursing plans for its production and studying available historical data.

In the booklet *Spartacus* which the Bolshoi Theatre put out for the *première*, Moiseyev speaks about the ballet which had been envisaged as a grand heroico-romantic performance. The composer, librettist and producer wanted to unfold through the media of music, choreography and stage setting the tragic theme of Spartacus' heroic revolt which was historically doomed to failure. The grandeur of the idea demanded for its realization monumental sets and the participation of the entire, very numerous, ballet company of the Bolshoi Theatre, extras and even chorus. On the choreographer's advice the composer had introduced, as an additional emotional shade, chorus into three scenes, *The Triumph of Rome*, *Circus* and *The Death of Spartacus*.

The producer wanted to depict the most vivid episodes from the heroic uprising of the gladiators in the dances and in pantomime; at the same time he had to give true-to-life portraits of the different characters in development and conflict. He has been largely successful in this. The production is distinguished by grandeur, magnificence and splendour. Some individual scenes are breath-taking in the intensity of passions, impressive mass evolutions and imaginative dancing. Roman street scenes are particularly colourful (for instance, the joyous crowds excitedly greeting the victorious legionaries returning from battle, the animated slave market where a small group of slaves headed by Spartacus proudly and courageously faces their enslavers, and so on).

D. Begak has succeeded in moulding a finished sculptural image of Spartacus, the mighty and valiant leader of gladiators; M. Plisetskaya's dancing is excellent as is her portrayal of the seductive and wily Aegina, a concubine of the Roman general Crassus.

This new production of the ballet has major artistic merits, and yet it is not entirely free from faults occasioned for the most part by an excess of superficial effects and certain naturalistic details (especially in the scenes of the gladiators' fights), as well as by the preponderance of pantomime over dance. Despite the fact that Khachaturyan's score contains a great number of excellent purely dance episodes and extensive symphonic passages of dramatico-dance nature, the producer resolved the climaxes by means, not of dance, but, for the most part, of pantomime, thus preventing the talented ballet actors from making full use of the media at the disposal of the classical dance, of which they are perfect masters.

We hope the theatre will continue perfecting its production of *Spar-*

tacus, which undoubtedly is one of the most outstanding musical and choreographic works of Soviet art.

During the Bolshoi Theatre rehearsals of *Spartacus*, lasting several months, Khachaturyan's time and energy were not his own. As is usually the case, the producer wanted the author to make changes in the score, to add new passages and go over the whole again and again.

* * *

In the spring of 1956 Khachaturyan left for a long tour of Armenia. As on the previous occasions, he visited collective farms, construction sites, and so on. He gave several concerts to acquaint Armenian audiences with his new works. Just then Armenia's cultural workers were busy preparing for the second festival of Armenian literature and art to be held in Moscow. Khachaturyan also took part in these activities; he composed for the festival an original vocal-symphonic piece in the nature of a solemn anthem.

The *Ode of Joy* written for mezzo-soprano solo, mixed chorus, ten harps, a unison of violins and symphony orchestra, was very favourably received at the closing concert of the Armenian festival, which was given at the Bolshoi Theatre. The violinists were children, pupils of music schools, but they coped with their difficult task commendably. The idea of the *Ode*—the happy life of the Armenian people—is expressed by the soloist; the chorus then joins in this inspired song of joy, singing glory to the Motherland.

The *Ode of Joy* is a masterpiece of incidental music, and for all its outward showiness contains not a few fresh thoughts and tasteful and expressive music.

* * *

May 1957 saw the staging of *Gayaneh* at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow. This *Gayaneh*, however, was quite different from the earlier version. Khachaturyan and B. Pletnyov, a librettist to whom the theatre had entrusted the writing of a new scenario with an entirely new development of action and new characterizations, had worked long and hard revising the ballet. All that remained of the old version were only a few mass scenes and the names of the characters. The theme and plot were quite new.

The central idea of the new *Gayaneh* is love, friendship, the courage and loyalty of the working people. The theme of jealousy and treachery

is counterposed to the life-asserting main theme. Georgy, a character in the ballet, commits a crime—leaving a friend in misfortune. This base act, prompted by jealousy, might have cost the friend his life. Georgy's conscience gives him no rest; he looks for a way to atone for his deed and finds it in an open confession.

The new libretto, naturally, entailed a new musical and dramatic development of the plot. The composer wrote many new pages for the ballet, about a third of the original score. These were extended pantomime scenes for the most part and episodes of musical landscape-painting and depiction of raging elements. With a few exceptions, the dance items have been left intact.

The new version of the ballet has given rise to animated controversy; some critics who admire Khachaturyan's talent and know the original version well, regret the changes in the score, necessitated by the new libretto. Frankly speaking the solution of the main theme given in this libretto is somewhat simplified, it lacks a convincingly motivated development of the plot and characters, and its dramaturgy is faulty at times.

Nevertheless the Bolshoi Theatre's production of *Gayaneh* was a success; the excellent music helped out the somewhat naive story and redeemed the shortcomings. Romantic fervour, highly expressive musical imagery, the composer's skill in handling his plot in accordance with the inner psychological meaning of the drama, beautiful melodies and the unusually colourful orchestration—all this may be said to justify the appearance of the new version.

It is clear that the new Bolshoi version of *Gayaneh* should by no means belittle (still less supersede) the original version, which has gained popularity both at home and abroad. *Gayaneh* will probably be known in the history of Soviet music and ballet in its two versions.

The Bolshoi Theatre production of *Gayaneh* is the work of the choreographer V. Vainonen and the producer E. Kaplan. The artist was V. Ryndin, the conductor, Y. Faier. R. Struchkova in the leading role created the appealing image of a proud and tender, passionate and lively Armenian girl.

* * *

In the summer of 1957 Khachaturyan took his first trip across the Atlantic. He and his wife made an extensive tour of the Latin-American countries, visiting different towns and cities in Uruguay, Argentina and Brazil. During his three months' stay in South America Khachaturyan

conducted 12 concerts of his works, performing the Second Symphony, the Violin, Piano and Cello concertos and the *Gayaneh*, *Spartacus* and *Masquerade* suites. The soloists were leading Latin-American musicians and Alexander Jenner, a young Austrian pianist who received the first prize at the international contest of pianists recently held in Rio de Janeiro.

This is what Khachaturyan told us about his trip:

"It had been stipulated before I left Moscow that my concerts in Buenos Aires were to take place at the Colon Theatre. But actually only the first concert was given there. The concert was a success. I liked the Colon orchestra; indeed I believe it to be the best orchestra in South America. The prices of the tickets were exceedingly high and so the concert was attended mostly by the well-to-do. Of course, I wanted to meet a mass audience, and you will appreciate with what pleasure I recall the concert given in the roofed sports building in the Luna Park. The tickets were reasonably priced, and there were about 25,000 people in the hall—a tremendous audience!"

As is always the case with prominent Soviet artists abroad, Khachaturyan and Nina Makarova not only acquainted foreign audiences with their work but also delivered lectures, held press conferences and talks with art workers, answered innumerable questions concerning life and culture in the Soviet Union and the work of Soviet composers, writers and painters.

In Argentina and Brazil, Khachaturyan met some of the leading composers; he speaks with particular warmth of the work of Juan José Castro, an Argentine composer-conductor whose music is imbued with the spirit of folk song, and of Alberto Ginastera, also a representative of the young Argentine national school of composers.

Among the Brazilian composers, Khachaturyan sets apart Heitor Villa-Lobos, the venerable composer and outstanding master, whose music is replete with the melodic and rhythm elements of folk song and dance, and two younger composers, Claudio Santoro, the author of the *Peace Symphony* which has been awarded an International Peace Prize, and Camargo Guarnieri, an original and talented master consciously basing his work on folklore elements.

Latin-American music critics appraised Khachaturyan's performance highly. His personal interpretation of his works, which were fairly well known before, gained him not a few new admirers.



C H A P T E R

AS KHACHATURYAN'S popularity and fame grew, his social prestige increased as well and his duties in the field of social work became more numerous. Conducting, work at the Union of Soviet Composers, and teaching took up a lot of his time and left little for composition. His desire to have at least a few days a week free from other duties, which he could devote exclusively to composition, was quite understandable. He had his wish in 1955 when he bought a country-house five kilometres off the station of Snegiri in a settlement called Masters of Art; many prominent musicians, theatre workers, authors and artists have their country-houses there.

Khachaturyan's two-storey cottage stands on the edge of the wood. The eight rooms are furnished simply and comfortably. In the composer's big study there is a piano, a writing-table and a large bookcase. The window opens on to a broad field and some wood-covered hills in the distance. The house, with century-old pine-trees murmuring overhead, stands in its own grounds, actually a piece of the forest, with an underbrush where one can pick berries and mushrooms or spend a quiet hour alone with nature.

When Khachaturyan does not go with his family to the seashore, he spends all the summer months here, in his country retreat. In winter he usually comes down on Friday and stays for the week end. The only permanent resident (besides the watchman) of Khachaturyan's country-house is Lyado, a big white poodle, the family's pet who has been with the Khachaturyans for over twelve years. Khachaturyan has made the name of the dog famous by naming one of his short pieces after it

(*Lyado Is Dangerously Ill*) which he composed for his son Karen when he was a little boy.

Away from the distractions of city life, Khachaturyan worked here on the new version of *Gayaneh, Ode of Joy* and his incidental music to films. He cherishes plans for several large-scale symphonic works—four rhapsodies *concertante* for violin and orchestra, piano and orchestra, cello and orchestra and the three instruments and orchestra (a kind of a triple concerto). Unfortunately, little has been done to realize these plans so far. The composer has to spend too much of his time on all kinds of revisions and alterations of his ballets demanded by the theatres staging them (the "revision" often takes the form of composing dozens upon dozens of pages of new music and re-working whole scenes). There is no doubt that Soviet art would stand to gain if the composer were left at peace to write a new ballet (or better still—an opera!) instead of re-writing and furbishing the old ones.

Opera—an infinitely varied synthetic genre of the musico-dramatic art—has long been attracting Khachaturyan; but, strangely, though a connoisseur and lover of the theatre, Khachaturyan has not tried his hand at it yet. In his talk with the present author he gave two reasons for this: firstly, he considers work in this genre an extremely exacting task and deems it necessary to drastically renovate the forms and expressive media used in it; secondly, it is difficult to find an adequate libretto.

It seems to Khachaturyan that today opera, a conventional genre preserving the forms hallowed by age-old traditions, is in a hard way. He is convinced that the failure of most composers to represent modern themes on the operatic stage stems from the irreconcilable contradictions between form and content. The old fossilized opera forms, no matter what their intrinsic value may be, cannot but be in crying contradiction with the new content; he is positive that they cannot serve as a vehicle for conveying realistically the images of our contemporaries and the emotions which they experience. The unhurried development of action in traditional opera is out of keeping with the accelerated tempo of modern life.

The modern composer, therefore, is faced with the arduous task of renovating opera forms, of finding new means of musical and histrionic expression, imbued with the rhythms of our days, which should be based on the principles of a realistic, true-to-life art with a democratic ideology. Should the experience of the cinema be used for this purpose?—

Perhaps. But then cinema art has its own specific features, its own aesthetic laws basically different from those governing opera.

In giving utterance to his ideas Khachaturyan emphasized that his thoughts about the ways of new opera should not be interpreted as a call for some abstract formal innovation, for a search of new opera forms for the sake of their novelty. "The new in opera should be determined by the new content of the images, the subject, it should be based on the immense heritage of the past, it should *develop further* but not defy the great traditions of classic opera."

Although fully aware of the difficulties in the way of a modern composer attempting to write an opera, Khachaturyan, nevertheless, does not give up the idea of tackling this task. He says that he has long been on the look-out for a theme that would fire his imagination and set the creative impulse into motion. He would very much like to write an opera about the destiny of the Armenian people, about the tragic fate of Armenians scattered all over the world, about their sufferings and struggles; an opera that would describe in vivid pictures the revival of the Armenian people in the Soviet years, the free and happy Soviet Armenia.

As yet this theme, not realized in a powerful and artistically convincing libretto, lives in the composer's mind alone.

"What attracts me, a composer, in the theatre and the cinema," Khachaturyan wrote, "are heroic images, the truth of passions, significant social conflicts. My work on the music to the film *Othello*, to the production of *Macbeth* and, especially, to *Spartacus*, constitutes the links of a single creative chain."

Let us hope that this "creative chain" acquires one more link—a heroic-epic opera in which the composer will create not only strong and stirring characters, but which will also be a milestone in the development of the opera genre.

* * *

Art and life, the artist's attitude to his time and day, are basic principles deciding the trend of progressive art. They are ever present in Khachaturyan's consciousness. That is why he is always ready to appear before mass audiences in workers' and students' clubs, in large and small towns of the Soviet Union. That is why he looks upon his trip to the towns of Western Siberia and the Altai in the spring of 1958 as one of the most stirring experiences in his life.

This tour (which Khachaturyan made jointly with the composer Dmitry Kabalevsky) included the towns in the Kuznetsk Coal Basin and the virgin-land areas never visited by a symphony orchestra until then.

The first concerts were given in Novosibirsk, a big industrial centre, the capital of Western Siberia, justly proud of its philharmonic, conservatoire and an excellent symphony orchestra—the one which accompanied Khachaturyan and Kabalevsky on their tour. The soloists appearing in the concerts were Victor Pikaizen, prize-winner of the violin section of the International Chaikovsky Contest, and Rosa Fain, prize-winner of the International Wieniawski Violin Contest.

The very first concerts in Novosibirsk showed what a keen interest people were taking in the work of their composers. The concerts conducted by the authors of the music (usually Kabalevsky took the first half and Khachaturyan the second) were attended by capacity audiences, and heard with rapt attention.

Kabalevsky and Khachaturyan wrote in *Pravda* of July 10, 1958: "With a feeling of deep satisfaction, joy and pride in our Soviet music we saw once more what a genuine and lively interest it arouses in our people."

Their Novosibirsk concerts over, the two composer-conductors, the violinists and the Novosibirsk Philharmonic Orchestra left for Kuzbas. Concerts of Kabalevsky's and Khachaturyan's music were given in Kemerovo, Yurga, Leninsk-Kuznetsky, Stalinsk and Prokopyevsk to audiences of workers, engineers and students of technical institutes. Kabalevsky conducted programmes including his symphonic pictures to *Romeo and Juliet*, Violin Concerto (Rosa Fain soloist), the *Comedians* suite and overture to the film *The Sisters*; Khachaturyan's programmes included the *Ode in Memory of Lenin*, Violin Concerto (Victor Pikaizen soloist) and the *Gayaneh* and *Masquerade* suites.

The two concerts of Kabalevsky's and Khachaturyan's music at the House of Culture in Pavlovsk were outstanding successes. There was an exciting holiday atmosphere in the hall. Collective farmers from near-by villages listened with bated breath to symphonic music—a new experience to them—and afterwards expressed their warm appreciation and gratitude to the composers.

"Do not forget the Altai collective farmers, remember that your music helps us to grow better harvests," they said at parting.

Khachaturyan returned from his Siberian tour full of vivid impres-

sions of life in that part of the country. In addition to orchestral concerts (of which there were 22), the composers gave many talks to musicians in the different towns of Kuzbas, visited music schools, industrial enterprises and even descended into the mines. In Kemerovo the composers were present at reviews of amateur art, heard local talent: singers, musicians and members of various vocal ensembles.

"This trip of ours brought us much joy," Kabalevsky and Khachaturyan wrote in conclusion of their article. "There is nothing to compare with the joy of communing with the people for whom we compose our music and from whom we borrow inspiration and strength for our work."

* * *

It would be premature to try to summarize the work of a composer who is in his prime. Yet, surveying the long and glorious road travelled by Khachaturyan we are awed by the outstanding part he has played in the development of Soviet music. His symphonies, ballets, concertos and music for the theatre and the cinema have proved exceptionally viable. Far from becoming outdated, their position in modern music seems to strengthen with each passing year. The two decades elapsing since the composition of the Piano Concerto have not robbed it of its significance; in the fifteen years we have known the Second Symphony it has asserted itself as a work of unfading beauty and lasting artistic value.

Khachaturyan is dear to us not only as one of the most significant composers of our time; we prize him as the initiator and head of an extremely fruitful trend in Soviet music, one that has brought about the unprecedented development of symphonic music in the Soviet East. He was the first among the Soviet composers to draw on the inexhaustible sources of Transcaucasian folk song for the creation of extended symphonic compositions embodying progressive ideas. Utilizing the experience of Russian classical music, he has opened up new vistas before symphonic music, infusing modern music with the life-giving juices of the folk art of Soviet East.

The past decades have witnessed an upsurge in musical production in a number of Soviet republics where original national schools of composition are emerging, holding great promise for the future, daringly developing the ancient traditions of folk art in a new way. This upsurge is particularly in evidence in the Transcaucasian republics—Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia—where operas, ballets, symphonies, instrumental

and vocal chamber music works, written by Armenian, Azerbaijan and Georgian composers, are imbued with the spirit of the new, display fresh content and expressive means, thus adding to the wealth of world music.

The important role played by Khachaturyan in bringing about this brilliant development of national musical cultures is beyond dispute. His work offers a glowing example of an organic unity of the two sources of music coming from the East and from the West. His artistic experience has strongly influenced the talents of such interesting and original composers as Khodja-Einatov, Kara Karayev, Fikret Amirov, Alexander Arutunyan, Arno Babajanyan and Grigory Yegiazaryan, who rank among the leading composers of the Soviet Union.

Khachaturyan's work is inspired with a wholesome optimistic view of life, it gravitates towards bright and sunny moods. While consistently advocating the principles of progressive socialist art, Khachaturyan untiringly calls upon composers to be bold revolutionaries in their approach to complex creative problems; he upholds the principle of free emulation among different creative personalities, of the coexistence of the most varied artistic trends within the one broad compass of social realism.

He has repeatedly voiced his ideas in his speeches at the Union of Soviet Composers, and in the press.

In the article "Vital Problems" Khachaturyan says:

"To me a composer is a creative personality, a son of his people, a man of his time who *has* something to say and who knows *how* to say it. . . . Within realist art, the development of world art is a unified whole in spite of the difference in styles determined by different epochs and national peculiarities. Styles undergo changes, harmonic idiom changes, the technique of orchestration changes, but the inner line of development of music is an uninterrupted whole, and its aim is to serve the people. Nineteenth-century Russian music is a striking example of this. How varied were the creative individualities! How daring and far-reaching were they in their attempt to express the spirit of their people! We know how passionately and unswervingly the Russian composers fought for their artistic principles, what heated disputes there were between them, what mistakes they sometimes made in their appraisals of some artistic phenomena or other. But like a full and turbulent river, each of them carried his work towards the great and eternal sea whose name is Russian classic music."

Aram Khachaturyan, an artist and Soviet citizen, has every reason to consider himself happy. His joyful and life-asserting music is loved by the broadest possible audiences. Lending a keen and attentive ear to reality around him, Khachaturyan knows how to speak in his music about things that are dear and near to millions of people.

A true innovator who has made a sizable contribution to art, Khachaturyan is one of the few artists who blaze new trails in creative work, and the best of his compositions constitute the pride and glory of Soviet music.

For his music to the ballet *Spartacus*, Khachaturyan in 1959 was awarded a Lenin Prize.

LIST OF MOST IMPORTANT WORKS

Music of the National Anthem of the Armenian S.S.R.

BALLETS

Happiness, ballet in three acts to libretto by G. Ovanesyan; first staged at Spendiarov Opera and Ballet Theatre in Yerevan in September 1939.

Gayaneh, ballet in four acts to libretto by K. Derzhavin, first staged at the Leningrad Kirov Opera and Ballet Theatre in December 1942 in the city of Perm. New version of the ballet to libretto by B. Pletnyov produced at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow in May 1957.

Spartacus, ballet in four acts to libretto by N. Volkov; first staged at the Leningrad Kirov Opera and Ballet Theatre in December 1956. In November 1957 produced at the National Theatre in Prague; in March 1958—at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow.

FOR SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

First Symphony, in three movements (1934)

Second Symphony, in four movements (1943)

Symphony-Poem (1947)

Dance Suite (1933)

Three Suites from the *Gayaneh* ballet (1943)

Suite from music to Lermontov's play *Masquerade* (1940)

Suite from music to Lope de Vega's comedy *The Valencian Widow* (1949)

Ode in Memory of Lenin (1949)

The Battle of Stalingrad Suite (1950)
Solemn Poem (1952)
Concert Waltz (1955)

FOR VOICE AND ORCHESTRA

Three Arias for voice and orchestra to lyrics by Armenian poets, *Poem, Legend, Dithyramb* (1944)

FOR CHORUS AND ORCHESTRA

Poem about Stalin for mixed chorus and orchestra (1938)
Ode of Joy for mezzo-soprano, mixed chorus, a unison of violinists and full orchestra (1956)

CONCERTOS

Concerto for piano and orchestra, in three movements (1936)
Concerto for violin and orchestra, in three movements (1940)
Concerto for violoncello and orchestra, in three movements (1946)

CHAMBER MUSIC WORKS

Trio for piano, violin and clarinet, in three movements (1932)
Double Fugue for string quartet (1932)

FOR PIANO

Poem (1927)
Dance (1927)
Toccata (1932)
Album of Children's Pieces (1946)
Five Pieces from music to the film *Othello* (1955)
Four Pieces from music to *Macbeth* (1955)

FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO

Dance (1926)
Song-Poem (1929)
Sonata (1932)

FOR VOICE AND PIANO

Songs (*On Gogol Boulevard* to words by S. Mikhalkov; *The Daughters of Iran* to words by A. Lakhuti; *Captain Gastello* to words by A. Lugin; *The Baltic Sea* to words by Y. Rodionov; *I'm Waiting for You* to words by G. Slavin; *What Children Dream of* to words by V. Vinnikov; *My Motherland*; *Armenian Drinking Song*; *The Carpet of Happiness*; *Song of the Heart*)

INCIDENTAL MUSIC TO PLAYS

Masquerade by Y. Lermontov (1940)
The Kremlin Chimes by N. Pogodin (1942)
Deep Prospecting by A. Kron (1943)
Macbeth by W. Shakespeare (1955)

MUSIC TO FILMS

Pepo (1935)
Zangezur (1938)
The Garden (1938)
Salavat Yulayev (1939)
Prisoner No. 217 (1945)
The Russian Question (1948)
Vladimir Ilyich Lenin (1949)
They Have a Native Country (1949)
The Battle of Stalingrad, in two series (1949)
The Secret Mission (1950)
Admiral Ushakov (1953)
Ships Storming the Bastions (1953)
Saltanat (1955)
Othello (1955)

TO THE READER

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